

The History
of the
Evangelical Lutheran Missouri Synod
in
North America,
and her Doctrinal Controversies
from the Time of the Saxon Emigration in the Year 1838
until the Year 1884

described

by

Chr. Hochstetter,
Pastor in Wolcottsville, N.Y.

Dresden

Heinrich. J. Naumann

1885

Translated by [BackToLuther](#)
with assistance from
[Dr. Fred Kramer's 1984 translation](#)



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Photo (left) of Hochstetter taken [from](#) haseleyfamily.com/showmedia.php?mediaID=513&medialinkID=878 (↗)

Family history [here](#) (↗):

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Foreword. [≥](#)

It has been correctly said: *Facta loquuntur* [**“Facts speak for themselves”**]. Also the history of the Missouri Synod needs no long preface. It will, however, be the appropriate place where the author of this writing will have to give an account to his readers of himself and of the cause of writing this book.

The writer of these lines was first inspired to enter into the service of the inner mission in 1850 during a “Kirchentag” meeting held in Stuttgart. Even then he recognized that North America, as the land of immigration, is actually the place for inner mission. But after he had just finished his studies in Tübingen, he entered the vicarial service for a few more years and only in spring 1853 he took a vacation from the Royal Württemberg Consistory, which was only issued for six years. Even before he left for America, he received a call through the mediation of Dr. Barth to a then newly formed congregation in Fort Wayne, Indiana. This congregation had been founded shortly before by a licensed preacher from the Ohio Synod in opposition to the long-standing congregation of Dr. Sihler, which belonged to the Missouri Synod, and the writer of these lines, by accepting this call, came into close association with the Ohio Synod, even before he knew it in detail. Since he did not find in the Ohio Synod what he was looking for, but rather was of the opinion that a strong external church government was needed from the outside in order to be able

to control the spiritual devastation and the often prevailing disdain for the preaching ministry, he felt drawn to the Buffalo Synod, whose senior was Pastor [J. A. A. Grabau](#) († 1879). In 1857, I was appointed as a deacon next to Pastor Grabau at the Trinity Church in Buffalo, where I served for ten years under very turbulent circumstances. In February 1866, I felt compelled to file a complaint with the Buffalo Synod ministry, and the negotiations that ensued led to a great schism, while Pastor Grabau, along with three other preachers, renounced the [Buffalo Synod](#) in the extra session of the Synod held in May of that same year, to which he had appealed. In September of the same year, the writer of these lines, together with the now also deceased Pastor [von Rohr](#), had the first meeting with Prof. Dr. [Walther](#), which took place in Dr. [Sihler's](#) home in Fort Wayne. It was there that the [Buffalo Colloquium](#) was arranged, which was held in November 1866 between the representatives of the Missouri Synod and those of the Buffalo Synod, as recorded in Chapters VIII and IX of this book. Since the representatives of the Buffalo Synod recognized at this public colloquium that the hitherto contested doctrine of the Missouri Synod, namely the doctrine of church and ministry, is the scriptural and symbolic confession of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, (with only one Buffalo delegate reserving differences), they subsequently joined the Missouri Synod with the largest part of the Buffalo Synod congregations, thus bringing to an end the longstanding dispute between these two synods. In the following year, 1867, the Missouri Synod elected the writer of these lines to represent the Eastern District of the Synod at the colloquium held between the representatives of the Iowa Synod and those of the Missouri Synod in Milwaukee, Wisc., as reported in

Chapter X of this paper. — The author believed that he had to make this preliminary reminder because it shows that the writer of this is not only in many places an eye- and ear-witness of what he reports in this book, but is also to some extent involved in the doctrinal disputes and struggles that were decided upon by the Missouri Synod. It has not been easy for us, the former members of the Buffalo Synod, to prove right those in whom we once thought were church destroyers; the readers will recognize from what is reported at the end of Chapter VIII that it was only under various tribulations, which had to serve us in the best possible way, and after the temptation which teaches us to remember the Word, that we were set on the path by God's gracious guidance, which we have now walked for 18 years in unity of spirit with the members of the Missouri Synod.

In accordance with the spiritual nature of the kingdom of God, it cannot be otherwise than that only there, in blessing, is building on the walls of our Lutheran Zion, where one builds on the right, old foundation, and where the Holy Spirit himself, who brings the dead to life through his powerful Word, is the master builder, through whom one stone is joined to another. Where the pure preaching of the Gospel as the power of God goes out to the salvation of souls, there the churches will also come to a healthy knowledge and to a proper form from within! This was confirmed by the Evangelical Lutheran Missouri Synod. The founders and leaders of the Synod did not support ecclesiastical political plans, nor did they believe that they had to take into account the circumstances in which they were placed in such a way that they would have pursued a carnal addiction to expansion; when they fought, they fought for the sanctuary of revealed truth, and when they built, they wanted to build the souls through the Word as living stones in the house of God, which is a spiritual temple in the Lord.

In the Foreword to the Book of the [Church and Ministry \[p.viii\]](#), Dr. Walther exclaims, "We must resolutely reject the accusation that we have bent and modelled the holy pure teaching of our Church in favor of our circumstances — — — We have not modelled the teaching of our Church according to our circumstances, but have ordered it according to the doctrine of our Church. Anyone who doubts this, we confidently call out to him: Come and see!"

The former members of the Buffalo Synod are not the only Lutherans who joined the Missouri Synod for protection and support; entire synods met with it and formed the Lutheran [Synodical Conference](#) on the basis of the unadulterated Word of God and under the banner of the Lutheran Confessions rooted in the Word of God; the Lutheran Church in this Occident [[Western world](#)] experienced an unprecedented revival through God's gracious visitation, the number of congregations associated with the Missouri Synod increased in an unprecedented way! Why should it be surprising when Satan rumbles about it, when the little ship of our synodical fellowship is threatened and afflicted by heavy storms, especially in recent times? While Satan is leading his own people by the scruff of the neck — and there is no doubt about this — Satan's cunning is also concealed under the fact that in the doctrinal dispute that has now arisen in the midst of our Synodical Conference we are dealing here with the doctrine of predestination, that is to say the eternal election of the children of God. First of all, this was a doctrine that was less well known and less mentioned in comparison with other doctrines that are even closer to the center of salvation, because it does not belong to the ABC's of the revealed truth of salvation, with which one must begin in teaching and learning. This is why [Luther](#) says in the preface to Chapter 9 of the Epistle to the Romans: "Every doctrine has its measure, time and age. It is the spirits who, before they have grasped and prayed the simple way of salvation, begin at the top

and want to explore the abyss of divine predestination, and worry about whether they are foreknown, i.e. whether they are the chosen ones. Follow this epistle (to the Romans) in its order. First grieve with Christ and the Gospel, that you may recognize your sin and His grace, and then contend with sin as taught here in chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. After that, when you have come to chapter 8, under the cross and suffering, the predestination in chapters 9, 10 and 11 will teach you how comforting it is. Because without the cross, suffering and death, predestination cannot be dealt with without harm and secret anger against God. Therefore Adam must first die before he can suffer this thing and drink the strong wine. Therefore be careful not to drink wine while you are still a baby." *)

Although in Germany, as far as it is "Protestant", the 400th anniversary of Martin Luther's birth was celebrated with great display, Luther's teachings are so little known and respected in many parts that one often thinks that what was brought to light from the depths of the divine Word as a precious prize of the Reformation through Luther's ministry is fanaticism [*Schwärmerei*]. One can be saved by human considerations, even by the very same objections and prejudices which the Romanists past and present raised against Luther and his associates. Thus it happened with regard to the doctrine of the Church and the Ministry, the so-called objective concept of the Church, by which one wanted to suppress the Evangelical doctrine of the Church, which was described as atomistic, subjectivistic, etc., is entirely the doctrine of the Church that Bellarmin put forward. In the same way, they are now fighting with the same reasons against our doctrine of the election of grace, which Erasmus once put forward against Luther.

*) The Synodical Report of the Ohio Synod of 1881 mocks the fact that the pure doctrine of grace has been compared to strong wine! Does one not know in that synod that the man of God Luther is being mocked with this?

On the other hand, it was also easy to attack the purely Lutheran doctrine of the Election of Grace [[or Predestination](#)], based on the Holy Scriptures, because many now are agreed according to Calvin's false doctrine, based on rational deductions, that it is exclusively a matter for the Reformed to have a doctrine of predestination, this doctrine was none of our business for us Lutherans! The vast majority of those who come to America from Germany think that we must fearfully guard against this doctrine, and it would be best not to talk about it at all. It must lead either to despair or to carnal security. In addition, thirdly, although Sacred Scripture often and extensively teaches of the election of grace for the children of God, many later teachers of the Lutheran Church left Holy Scripture far too much to one side in this place, and partly with the intention of fighting Calvin in their own self-chosen way, and partly as a result of a tendency to make the incomprehensible comprehensible precisely here, deviated from the doctrine of the Formula of Concord that was based on Scripture. — The warning of the Formula of Concord that we should not investigate what God hides from this mystery of the election of grace, nor that we should conclude or ponder it according to our own thoughts, was disregarded. Our confession says: we cannot harmonize it! However, the later dogmatists already began to replace the general order of grace, as it was established by God for all people from eternity, with the special election of "special persons" who, according to the eternal purpose of God, are prescribed to attain eternal life by way of the order of grace. There is no doubt that in many passages of the Holy Scripture the Lord Christ, when he speaks of the chosen ones in John 10:28; 15:16 and Matt. 24:24, and the apostles, especially St. Paul in Romans chapters 8 and 9, reveal this election of grace to comfort and strengthen Christians in this last, evil time. Nevertheless, those who are now lecturing in the footsteps of Luther and in accordance with the

Formula of Concord are accused of being crypto-Calvinists, i.e. people who claim to be Lutheran but teach as Calvinists. — Since up to now in Germany the teachers of the Missouri Synod have been accused of being too servile to the Lutheran dogmatists and only repristinated them, this latest doctrinal dispute could have been seen as an example that we do not worship idolatry in matters of faith and doctrine and do not let our conscience be bound to human writings. *) It is precisely during a doctrinal controversy that one becomes quite aware that nothing clings so firmly in one's conscience as the Word of God revealed in Holy Scripture, which is therefore also the only judge in the controversy and the perfect source of our Christian faith.

Meanwhile, in the course of this dispute, the fact came to light that the Missouri Synod had not a few kickers [*Nachtreter*] who were already secretly grieving that it had more enemies than many had previously thought. They believed that the hour had come when these Missourians, whose testimony had often rebuked them, could finally be branded as heretics to their heart's content! Already the Iowa Synod leaders reported in Germany: "So much is certain, Missouri wavers at its basic foundation", it was said: there, there! we wanted that! Ps. 35:25 [**Ah, so would we have it.**"]. That is why in this doctrinal controversy, too, the battle was waged against the people, especially against the dear Dr. Walther, on whom the most poisonous arrows of the slanderous opponents were aimed. Of course, these arrows did not hit him; it was also only a small fraction of our ministry that allowed itself to be turned away from our synod, and the number of congregations that let themselves be swept away by this artificial current was even smaller. What Christain

*) There are still quite a few matters to be found, such as the doctrine of Sunday and the power of the secular government in church matters, in which we cannot follow the dogmatists, but teach on the basis of the Scripture according to our Lutheran symbols.

hearts, however, should not be filled with sadness and melancholy over the fact that Dr. Walther had to issue a public warning to these slanderers, yes, that two of these slanderers were only willing to make a satisfactory apology from fear of the punishing arm of the government, in which they confessed that they had been confused with respect to the person, they now realize that Dr. Walther is a man of excellent piety, of sublime integrity of character, and rightly the recognized leader of the respectable body which he has headed since its existence, etc. *)

Just as it happened to Athanasius in the fight against Arianism, as the apostles had to experience it according to Christ's prophecy, so also now the faithful servants of God are still walking "by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report", 2 Cor. 6:8. Also in Germany the Missouri Synod is at present badly disparaged. — It was recently noted by Dr. Walther in the *Der Lutheraner*: "The insults of our enemies are much more salutary to us than the praises we reap", and the founders of the Missouri Synod have always been far from wanting to set up a monument to their own glory through the Synod, yet the writer of these lines feels that now is the time to give an overview of the history of the Missouri Synod through this booklet, in which, as everyone knows, Dr. Walther's name must be mentioned on almost every page. Although he did not seek his own glory, St. Paul had to justify, for the glory and doctrine of God which he proclaimed, the administration of his office to the false teachers, and the writer of this would have liked a more skilful pen

*) While even the church papers published outside our Synod expressed their indignation at these slanders, the Ohio Synod papers declared that Dr. Walther had caused this bitterness through his own fault!

to put the Missouri Synod in perspective for its accusers. However, since the attempt which I made in the *Lutheran Volksblatt* in 1882 to describe the beginnings of the Missouri Synod was well received, I was repeatedly asked by the esteemed publisher, Heinrich J. Naumann of Dresden, to write a history of the Missouri Synod following the essay published in 18 issues of the *Lutheran Volksblatt* of Canada. This is now available in the present book. — In order to close this preface with a more pleasant note, a testimony is printed here, which the Missouri Synod received outside its area of responsibility from a publication published within the [General Council](#), namely from the *Pilgrim through World and Church* in Vol. 5, p. 370, in the following words: "This is not the place to go into the history of the Missouri Synod, the largest and most important Lutheran Synod in our country, but I do not wish to conceal or at least suggest that I have no more obvious example of how God blesses human faithfulness than the Missouri Synod itself. If she had not held so steadfastly to her profession of pure doctrine, if she had not borne witness so sharply and fought against all and every deviation from the path which she alone and correctly discerned, if she had shown herself to be more yielding in practice than in doctrine, if she had been just a little more comfortable with the views of our more easily fickle times, she would not have achieved what she can now call her own. She took her reason captive under the obedience of Christ and the Lord has rewarded her. The glory of God, the pure truth of the Word, which found its clearest expression in the confession of the Lutheran Church, stood and stands higher to her than the favor of the world and the windy inventions of men. If the Lord God had not had mercy on the Lutheran Church in America by placing the Missouri Synod in its midst, we would be a small group that might still bear the name

Lutheran, but would otherwise be an open pasture for foxes and other wild animals. When I think of what has been done by the grace of God by the Missourians, I cannot join in the clamor against them. It is my belief that the Missourians attribute their success to God's grace, not to their diligence, however proud they may be of it. The Lord bless the brave Saxons and make their salt work ever more vigorously in the leaven of American church life."

In the hope that many more will join in this blessing, this booklet is handed over to the reader for careful consideration

[Wolcottsville, Niagara County, New York,](#)

in October 1884.

The Author.

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Misprints — Corrections.

With the far distance of the author from the place of printing, may the inclined reader excuse the following misprints: [BTL: all of these corrections have been applied]

Page 18, line 4 from the top instead of confused read stray.

“ 25, line 24 from above instead of hers read hers.

" 29, last line instead of the following reads the following.

" 43, line 2 from below instead of 1863 is to be read 1866.

“ 64, line 13 from above instead of 11,500 dollars is to be read 115,000

Dollars.

85", the quotation marks must be placed at the bottom of the note after the word "would".

" 91, line 2 from above the same behind the words: to become certainty.

140,

141, 128, 149, 176, 181, 282,

13 Not Au-Arbor, but Ann-Arbor.

8 Do not start from the top, but rather start from the bottom.

16 not Peritzdorf, but Paitzdorf.

16 from above not Dr. Selle, but Dr. Sihler.

2 from above not support, but continuance.

12 and 14 not Saginov, but Saginaw.

Furthermore, the author asks to note the following:

On page 208, line 14, it should be added that in Walther's book on church and ministry the theses put forward are secondly based on testimonies of the church in its public confessions — and then thirdly on testimonies in the private writings of its teachers.

Furthermore, the following should be considered as an [addendum to Chapter VI](#): Also in Baltimore, Md., where also many German immigrants land, there is an emigrant mission, which has come into being through the care of the local pastors and congregations of the Missouri Synod.

The agent of this mission is Mr. Wilhelm Sallmann, who with great self-denial dedicates himself to the counselling and safe onward transportation of the immigrants there.

His address is: 117 East Pratt Street in Baltimore, Md.

**Directory
of the individual districts of the Missouri Synod
and their presidents.**

General President:

Pastor H. C. Schwan in Cleveland, Ohio.

1. Canada District. President: Pastor F. Dubpernell in Sebringville, Perth Co. Ontario, Canada.
2. Illinois District. President: Pastor H. Wunder in Chicago. Ill.
3. Iowa District. President: Pastor J. L. Craemer in Fort Dodge, Iowa.
4. Michigan District. President: Pastor Joseph Schmidt in Saginaw City, Mich.
5. Minnesota and Dakota Districts. President: Pastor O. Clöter Sr. in Wolsey Beadle Co., Dak.
6. Central District. President: Pastor J. H. Niemann in Cleveland, Ohio.
7. Nebraska District. President: Pastor J. Hilgendorf in Arlington, Wash. Co. Nebr.
8. Eastern District. President: J.P. Beyer in Brooklyn, N.Y.
9. Southern District. President: Pastor T. Stiemke in New Orleans La.
10. Western District. President: Pastor F. J. Biltz in Concordia, Lafayette Co. Mo.
11. Wisconsin District. President: Pastor C. Strasen in Watertown Wisc.

The Emigration from Saxony and the Settlement of the Lutherans in Perry County, Missouri; [Walther's judgment of emigration](#) (4); [Prussion Union denies Lutheran doctrines](#) (5); [Pastor Martin Stephan](#) (9); [Idolatrous veneration of Stephan](#) (11); [Pastor Stephan plans emigration](#) (13); [Land purchased in America, settlement](#) (15);

1. In God's name let us on our way
His holy Angel be led, we pray,
Like Israel in Egypt-land,
When they fled Pharaoh's hand.
Lord have mercy.

This hymn, taken from the [old Leipzig hymnal no. 675](#) [verse from [Walther's Hymnal, #330](#)], is the hymn that the Saxon emigrants sang on the first Sunday of their journey, as many of them had set out from Dresden to Bremen with the then candidate [Joh. Friedrich Buenger](#). Since the biography *) published after the death of the blessed Pastor Joh. Buenger contains excerpts from Buenger's diary, the following should be reported from it: [[p. 43-47](#)]

“On October 20, 1838 noon, 12:30 PM, was the important moment when our redemption began. After those who had received their passport had boarded the Elbe ship, the Lord Christ was thanked unanimously but in silence for the hour of redemption that had come. And He, the Lord of His Church, was called upon for His fine gracious presence, His protection and guidance on the journey and for the salvation and guidance of those who remained behind. Many curious spectators who had been waiting for several hours for our departure

*) [Short curriculum vitae of the once venerable Pastor J. F. Buenger](#), described by Dr. C. F. W. Walther, St. Louis 1882, published by F. Dette [[Kurzer Lebenslauf des weiland ehrwürdigen Pastor Joh. Friedr. Buenger...](#)]

followed us with their eyes, probably partly with good wishes, but mostly with curses. As we boarded the train, I heard one distinguished gentleman say to another: "The stupid people of Stephan will all perish; they think that Stephan is their Lord and Saviour, the stupid people!" (Buenger continues in his diary with these words): "Oh how happy we are, that we know our Lord and Saviour better than these people think of us! But that we know Him better than these people think we do, we have to thank the faithful preaching of our dear pastor" — "October 21. Today was Sunday. At 10 o'clock we gathered for our church service. I read the Kyrie, All glory be to God on high etc. and the sermon of Pastor Stephan (from his sermon book). It was very comforting for us that today's Gospel (on the 19th Sunday, after Trinity) began with the words: 'Then he entered the ship and went over again'." —

In the following, Buenger reports how he held daily morning devotions on the ship and catechized with the children. Arriving near Wittenberg, he began to tell the children the story of the Reformation. A certain deacon Luther (Buenger adds to his name "a Luther, a descendant of Luther after the flesh, but not a Lutheran.") accompanied the emigrants to the castle church and showed them the strange things. They also came to Luther's living room and [Buenger](#) wrote in the visitors' book: "On October 22, 1838, this room of the sainted Dr. Luther visited several Lutherans emigrating from Saxony to America for the sake of the old Lutheran faith". — "October 25. After the morning devotional arrival in Magdeburg, where we visited the magnificent cathedral, where once the expellees for the sake of the unionist Interim witnessed the [one](#) faith, but where unified worship [= [Prussian Union](#), "Union", "United", [United Synod](#), today's "Evangelicals"] has been held since 1830. Many monuments were removed. In Magdeburg one also met a small separated Lutheran congregation; about 40 people, according to the diary, stick together and have a furnished prayer room.

They were also determined to leave Europe as soon as Pastor Grabau, who was then still imprisoned in Heiligenstadt, had received the requested permission to emigrate. —

One can see from these and other reports contained in Buenger's diary what it was that these Saxon emigrants were up to. Although they still followed Pastor Stephan without thinking badly of him, it was still necessary to preserve the old Lutheran faith, as Buenger in Wittenberg expressly noted! Emigration by sea was rare in Saxony at that time; emigration for religious reasons was something that had never been seen before. This organized emigration, whose head and leader was Pastor Martin Stephan, had something unusual from the beginning. While most emigrants usually leave Germany under the pressure of time and seek above all a good earthly advancement in America, this Saxon emigration society, on the other hand, consisted in many cases of those who suffered great loss of their previous earthly prosperity through emigration; there were not only Saxon weavers and stocking makers among them, but also merchants, physicians, lawyers, civil servants and painters, who were allowed to hope for little external happiness in America. Besides Pastor Stephan, 6 pastors, 8 candidates for the ministry, 1 school teacher and 3 candidates for school teacher had joined the Society. The undersigned, as far as their knowledge was sufficient, professed their sincere commitment to the pure Lutheran faith and declared in paragraph 2 that, after careful consideration, they saw before them the human impossibility of keeping this faith pure and unadulterated in their present homeland, to confess and reproduce in their descendants, they were therefore urged by their conscience to emigrate and seek another country where they could enjoy undisturbed the means of grace that God has decreed for all people for their salvation, in their completeness and purity, and

preserve them for themselves and their descendants, etc. (Excerpt from [biography of Buenger, p. 42](#)) — Already in the summer of 1838 two commissioners had rented 5 ships in Bremen, the wealthy ones paid their assets into a joint credit fund, like the old apostolic Christians, from which not only the passage for all — altogether about 750 souls — was to be paid, but also the necessary land in America was to be bought. The sum of 123,987 Thaler in cash was pooled into this credit fund.

[↑] Although most of these Saxon preachers, who at that time were assigned to Pastor Stephan later blamed themselves severely because, as a result of the lack of clear knowledge, much of the sinfulness of this emigration was also undermined, but the situation had become so bleak for the Lutherans, not only in Prussia but also in Saxony, that [Dr. Walther](#) judges concerning it as follows: “There is no question that the emigration, which a large group of Lutheran-believing Christians in Saxony finally decided to emigrate, was not their sin, but rather that for entirely too long they had allowed themselves to be pressured to do many things against their conscience which they considered inescapable, and that in particular the ministers had not waited to be deprived of the offices and exiled because they, in obedience to God, had resisted ungodly regulations.” The pure Word of God had become very rare in all of Germany. The year 1817, in which the 300th anniversary of the beginning of the Lutheran Reformation was to be celebrated, had already been used as an opportunity to tear down the dividing walls between the various churches and to initiate the introduction of the so-called “Union”. Although Luther fought against any kind of syncretism to the end, and even at the end of the Marburg religious talks with Zwingli said to him: "You have a different spirit from us," yet now there was a widespread cry that it was no longer necessary to recognize a fundamental difference between Lutheran and Reformed.

The doctrine of the poor sinner's justification before God by faith in the blood of Christ was ridiculed as an outdated theology of blood, Christ himself was often made only a teacher of wisdom who showed great steadfastness in his death, his divinity was boldly denied, the Holy Spirit was presented as a beautiful enthusiasm in the soul of free men, the Holy Trinity itself was denied.

[↑] In Prussia, the Union of Lutherans and the Reformed, i.e. the event to a new so-called Evangelical Church was introduced by royal cabinet order. As a result, a new Agenda for general use was prescribed in place of the old Lutheran one, a church book in which, for example, the Lutheran confession of the Lord's Supper was denied in select words. The Superintendents and other church leaders, who willingly accepted this Agenda and urged their subordinates to introduce the new books, were presented with orders; at that time it was customary to say that these gentlemen received the Order of the Red Eagle *non propter acta*, but *propter agenda*; But those pastors who refused to accept the new Agenda, those who remained faithful to their oath of confession and continued to celebrate Lutheran worship with the congregations that adhered to them, were imprisoned. In Silesia in particular, several churches were taken away from the Lutherans by force of arms. In the Kingdom of Saxony rationalism was much more widespread among preachers and among the people than in the Old Prussian provinces, and although the Union of the Saxon Regional Church was not a union between the Reformed and the Lutherans, it was a union between unbelievers and believers. Although the pastors of the Saxon Regional Church were sworn to the whole Book of Concord without any clauses, no one asked whether this obligation would be fulfilled. One observed that this swearing in was a mere comedy; the most important

institutions of the state church already aimed at denying the truth in the forms which were used in church functions in order to please the rationalists. Since 1812 an agenda was in use which so miserably watered down Christian doctrine in its forms that it could only give a Lutheran preacher a guilty conscience, and while the unbelieving preachers enjoyed full freedom, a Lutheran-believing preacher could not dare to depart from the rationalist agenda in any way. Dr. Walther reports that although as a pastor in Saxony he had used the old formula of absolution, which did not contain the new Agenda, his unbelieving school teacher had therefore sued him at the Superintendent, and the Superintendent in turn sued the state Consistory, whereupon the pastor had to pay a fine. Finally, Walther was strictly forbidden to use the old absolution formula and was ordered to reimburse the costs incurred by the trial. Likewise, the hymn books and school books were so completely soured by the leaven of rationalism that a believing pastor had to be in deep trouble with his conscience. As Pastor Walther was again tried for the attempt to introduce a truly Christian school reading book and the ignorant local school board already acted against him, the intention of the rationalist opponents was prevented by God's merciful providence, while a believing patron saint (the Minister of State, [Count Detlev von Einsiedel](#)) [add Wiki pic] took up the matter and intervened, but Pastor Walther had to pay the costs of the trial once again. Only on the day he emigrated did the congregation reimburse him these costs without being asked, with the explanation that the trial had only been conducted for the sake of their children. — Almost as great was the distress of conscience of the Lutheran laymen in Saxony. Obviously false prophets were to be recognized as their shepherds and pastors, to baptize and confirm their children by them, to have their confessions made by them and to have the Holy Communion served. As often as a child was born to believing parents,

then the father had to rush to the unbelieving pastor and ask him to choose the one tolerable form for the baptism of the child, which was still on the agenda among five. It also happened in Saxony that a congregation refused in vain to accept an unbelieving school teacher who had been sent to it by the consistory. A battalion of soldiers was then placed in the village, and by this means the acceptance of this teacher was forced. Neither could a congregation in the Saxon state church refuse to accept an unbelieving false preacher. It was impossible that a congregation separating from such a state church institution, which is not united by one faith, least of all by the one true faith, to be a sin! Rather, one might be tempted to ask: Why did not the faithful Lutherans in Saxony, long before they emigrated to America, tear apart these man-made bonds in which they were entangled, and form separate Lutheran congregations, such as exist today in Prussia and also in Saxony? To this Dr. Walther answers in his [biography of Buenger \[p. 39\]](#): "How gladly the Lutheran-believing preachers and laity would have given everything at that time to obtain permission to unite to form a Lutheran Free Church separated from the deeply corrupted, apostate state church! But at that time it was simply impossible to think of their release for such a purpose. Emigration to a country in which religious freedom reigns was therefore recognized as the only way out of the increasingly unbearable burden of conscience that threatened to suffocate all life of faith within them." — In itself emigration must be seen as a middle course, which a Christian will not make use of in such a way as to violate his love for his brothers and to leave the fellowship of a Lutheran church or school wantonly. At that time, however, there was no free right of assembly, no prospect at all of the formation of a free church in Germany, so the Prussian Lutherans were also entitled to declare: we would rather sacrifice our homeland

and leave the King his land if we can only find a sanctuary across the sea! The Breslau Lutherans did wrong to want to intervene against the emigration of their fellow believers when, shortly after the Saxon emigration, many separated people in Prussia also seized the baton and moved to the area of Buffalo, New York, as well as to Wisconsin.

As great as the darkness was that had fallen upon the land, the Lord still had his 7000 in Saxony, who did not bend their knees before the Baal of the Zeitgeist. In such places, where no believing preacher could be found, the Christians gathered in lay meetings and read from their old edification books. The spiritual hunger and thirst was so great that they often set out on Saturday and walked for miles to hear a Lutheran preacher on Sunday. The private assemblies in which they built each other were often blown apart by royal police [*Gendarmen*]. But the Lutheran preachers, who had a large influx from other parishes, were looked upon with envy and persecuted by their superiors. The extensive congregation in Frohna, in the Mulde valley, where the pastor was [W. Keyl](#) [pic], resembling a green oasis in the desert, many souls were awakened by his ministry and strengthened in faith. The burning zeal of Pastor Keyl could only arouse hatred among the rationalists, and when he claimed that the Lutherans in Saxony were in the right, when they also wanted to have public preaching, and not only right baptism, but also the Lord's Supper pure and unadulterated according to the Lutheran symbols, he was answered that he was not bound to the letter, but only by the spirit of the Confessions! Pastor Keyl thought that he wished to see the book with the white pages, which contains nothing but the spirit of the symbols! One could now well see that the freedom and independence of the Lutheran Church was at stake when it says: "The spirit is enough! It is not necessary to speak in one way!"

Only where the commitment to the Lutheran Confessions is taken fully seriously are the rights of congregations seeking Lutheran preaching and pastoral care protected. Where there were still truly Lutheran preachers, as was the case in the Mulde Valley, they enjoyed the more love and trust in their congregations, the more they were hated by the world. The largest following among those who sighed for redemption from the bonds of unbelief was found by Pastor Martin Stephan in Dresden.

[↑] Stephan was for some time a [pastor of the Bohemian parish](#) at St. John's Church in the Pirna suburb. Born on August 13, 1777 in Stramberg in Moravia, he was brought up as a Christian by poor but pious parents. During his stay in Breslau, he became known as a linen weaver, together with the noble deacon and professor [Scheibel](#), and the Christians there helped Stephan to enter the grammar school and from there to attend the universities of Halle and Leipzig. In 1809 he first became the pastor of a Lutheran parish in Haber in Bohemia, but after a year's time he followed a call to the Bohemian parish in Dresden. "The less the Word of God appeared in the other churches of Dresden at that time, the faster [Stephan's](#) church filled up with the souls there eager for salvation, for Stephan really preached the Gospel, and he did so on the basis of his own experience." In his small and unadorned church he had German sermon at 7 o'clock in the morning and then Bohemian sermon at 10 o'clock. Since he was only allowed to hold Holy Communion in the Bohemian service, his German listeners often came to the Bohemian sermon, which was followed by the consecration and administering of the sacrament in German. — Stephan had nothing of the arts of worldly eloquence, at least he did not use them. Hardly moving a hand — he simply presented God's advice on man's salvation, emphasizing the spirituality and strictness of the law and the forlornness of every human being by nature, as well as the richness of grace of the Gospel and the certain

help that every sinner could find with Christ. Whoever once listened to him, if he was not filled with the mocking spirit, felt deeply moved in his innermost being, without really knowing how it was happening. — In his sermons Stephan did not try so much to work on people's emotions as on their consciences. In doing so, his significant knowledge of human nature and knowledge of the human heart was a great asset to him. There could be no question that Stephan's intention was to cause rapturous emotions through his sermons. Whoever overcame himself to choose him and to seek counsel and comfort from him, — as a rule, found the most proven advice and true comfort. It was a fact so well known and recognized even by Stephan's opponents among the faithful pastors of the country, that the most helpless and distressed souls who turned to them, ultimately pointed to Stephan himself as a man who, if anyone could, would help them. Not only his regular listeners, but also some of the preachers who had been encouraged by him to give a zealous testimony, saw in Stephan their chief shepherd. The rarer such a man was, and the more the world became aware of him, as a dangerous man who had to be stopped at the first opportunity, the more unlimited was the veneration with which many Christians clung to him. — The pitiable man could not bear such a position. Rumors soon began to circulate that strongly suspected his way of life. Stephan had to answer for his actions, but since he emerged innocent from all investigations, the nasty rumors about Stephan were considered mere slander, which came only out of aversion against his teaching. For the sake of the latter, and for the sake of private meetings held in the parsonage with open doors, with singing and prayer, he was severely attacked as the founder of a new rapturous sect as early as 1821. Stephan replied to this in the national newspaper of the Germans, among other things, as follows: "I belong to neither an

old or a new sect; I hate all sectarianism and enthusiasm: I am an Evangelical Lutheran preacher and preach the Word of God as it is written in the Bible. I build my church on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, where Christ is the cornerstone. I have and preach the apostolic religion that Luther preached so purely and courageously — Law and Gospel, the knowledge of sin and the knowledge of grace in Christ — I preach faith in Jesus Christ, the incarnate God, and in his reconciliation for the sin of the world completed on the cross. I have no particular religious opinion — I do not preach in a miraculous, mystical sense, but in the sense of our pious ancestors — my religion is neither above nor below the Bible, but in the Bible; it leads to Christ and receives from him." In the following, he still resists the spiteful omissions that are made about his church, as if it were in a state of rapturous debauchery. — [↑] As foolish as these attacks were on the part of the unbelievers, the idolatrous veneration with which even talented preachers, such as W. Keyl, Hermann Walther and others clung to Stephan, already expressed a pernicious influence. The sainted Pastor Keyl subsequently confessed that from the time when he joined so closely with Pastor Stephan, he gradually got into a legalistic, dominating pastoral activity. "Unfortunately," writes Pastor Keyl, "I have caused many to make all kinds of harmful prejudices against true Christianity; I have often made the audience feel more bitter than convinced; I have made them feel the burden of sin more than the desire for God's grace. I did not always present repentance to God, faith in Christianity, new obedience, steadfastness to the end in the proper relationship, not clearly enough as the sole fruit of grace, and often in such a way that the thought could easily arise that it was impossible to live in such a way." Although it was not hidden from Pastor Keyl at the beginning that Stephan often let his obstinacy run its course, and even became angry about insignificant things, he was moved

more and more to put his trust in Pastor Stephan anew by the accusations as if he was causing separation and annoyance when he and his church held back from Stephan; "Yes," he says, "I committed the folly of asking him for forgiveness in the most humble terms. The [well-known Pastor Keyl](#), in deep pain, indicated a major error from which this blind dreaming and wretched man-slavery among Stephan's followers was derived, saying: "The delusion was growing that no one could find the right path to heaven and stay there without special counsel from his pastor." *) Without being able to prove a conspicuous error, Stephan had nevertheless taken a wrong direction with regard to the doctrine of the preaching ministry; since he understood it to mean the preaching ministry in the strict sense, usually called the pastoral office, it is obviously wrong to consider it a special means of grace. It is all the more striking that in the above-mentioned emigration order, under Paragraph 2, one finds the sentence that the means of grace which one wishes to preserve for oneself and one's descendants include first and foremost: the ministry of reconciliation in its entirety, and with undiminished freedom; — only after this is the full proclamation of the Word and the pure sacrament listed. Since in this case Stephan was considered the last light of the world and the only remaining pillar of the Church, the madness easily took hold, as if only the preachers associated with Stephan were lawful and orthodox pastors, as if the true Church was bound to Stephan. Since he had to come into conflict with the symbolic books and Dr. Luther's writings, Stephan would, when such a case arose, tell his followers that they had to understand it differently, for Luther had explained it more clearly in other places,

*) From: [Life and Work of the Venerable E. G. Wilh. Keyl](#), by J. F. Köstering, St. Louis, Mo., Luth. Konkordieverlag [CPH] 1882.

or: this is not suitable for our time, which is why the saying was also familiar to him, which to this day, in order to eliminate Luther, is common among the Romanizing Lutherans: Luther must be translated from his time into ours. — One is now tempted to believe that whoever was so closely associated with Stephan at that time could not have been a true Christian who carried his soul in his hands. However, it was precisely the very first concern and willingness to give everything for the salvation of the soul that persuaded Keyl, Buenger and many others to follow Stephan to America. It was noticed that Stephan gave at least a bad appearance, but unfortunately the believers (as Dr. Walther writes) were not accustomed to judge everything unyieldingly according to the written Word of God. For more than 20 years Stephan had, as it seemed, been the only last witness for the Lutheran truth in Saxony, but now he was not what he used to be, because he did not avoid the evil appearance (contrary to 1 Thess. 5:22), and the closer the time of emigration came, the more often anxious doubts about Stephan took hold of his friends. A candidate who was also attached to him withdrew the trust he had placed in him; but when this candidate was suddenly paralyzed in all his limbs by a stroke, this circumstance was exploited by Stephan, as if a divine punishment had to be seen in this illness. [↑] The emigration was planned by Stephan for a long time. Already when Prof. [B. Kurtz \[1795–1865\]](#) [[pic](#)] from Gettysburg traveled through Germany in the 1820's, Stephan had spoken with him about the possibility of a resettlement to America, but it was not until the thirties that Stephan initiated those closer to him into his plan. Around Pentecost 1836, a special meeting was held at Stephan's home in Dresden, where the conditions of the state church were discussed in detail and found so hopeless that it was declared that the move to another country, where the Church enjoyed full religious freedom, was an

urgent necessity. When Australia was weighed against America, the latter was chosen as the target.

From that time on, all the necessary arrangements were made quietly, only a jolt was needed and they were ready to go. Stephan said he was still waiting for a sign from God, and when he was picked up by the police in the late summer of 1838, and soon afterwards suspended [**actual suspension in November 1837**] from his office, he sent word to all those connected with him that the hour had come for departure, and that anyone who wanted to save his soul should prepare to leave. Also the lust for power, which came to light in such excessive demands (for those who did not want to go along with him were suspected), was put right by his followers. So Stephan was able to go one step further during the sea voyage and persuade his shipping company that, since there must be a center from which light and justice emanate, a bishop must be chosen for the entire emigration community. In doing so, he initially testified that he did not want to be a bishop in America, but only advisor to the bishop. But there had to be someone who would take the reins into his hand. On the Mississippi, however, as one approached the city of St. Louis, which was to be the meeting place, a special act of homage was also drawn up and signed by all the shipping companies with few exceptions. Through this document the undersigned dedicated themselves with heart and life to their "God-given"(?) bishop. The sainted Pastor Keyl later confessed, suffering from much suffering, that he had faithfully helped in his blindness that his fellow travellers agreed to this election of Stephan as their bishop and took the blasphemous oath demanded by Stephan, in which they not only vowed unconditional obedience to Stephan in all church and communal affairs, that they even wanted to beware of all suspicious thoughts rising against Stephan in them, but also promised to live, suffer and die in the episcopal constitution initiated by Stephan.

Even in public church prayers from now on the "Bishop" was remembered. Just as Luther judged the papacy to be very reasonable in its whole constitution, so did the followers of Stephan think that the difficulty of the new settlement required that everything be placed under the overall direction of one man. Christians of weak faith find it easier to be attached to one person and to external and internal experiences than to keep their faith completely to the Word. — However, there was not much of the desired blessing that submissiveness to Stephan would bring. It was a sad experience that one of the five emigrant ships, the Amalia, was buried in the waters of the sea. The other four ships arrived in the port of New Orleans in December 1838 and January 1839 after a stormy voyage. Those who had gathered in St. Louis enjoyed the hospitality of an English congregation, [[Episcopals](#)] which gave them the use of its church for three years. The new Bishop Stephan, however, tried to preserve his dignity through noble seclusion, had an episcopal church order worked out under his leadership and lived at a high level. He squandered \$4,000 in a short time. — [[↑](#)] And since the credit [or: common] treasury was running out, it was finally found necessary to follow Stephan's overstretched plans to the extent that he bought land 112 miles away from St. Louis, on the Mississippi, namely 4440 acres. Although the choice was not a good one, this land offered an excellent landing place near today's Wittenberg in Perry County, Missouri. After workers were sent there to erect some huts, Stephan himself, accompanied by Pastor Hermann Walther and some confidants, left for this location in April 1839. He wanted to live and reign there closed from the outside world according to his own despotism. According to his instructions, no one was to visit him there, unless he had first asked Stephan or had been called. They were also to build a palace for him there according to his own wishes

while the settlers had to make do in miserable camps and under tents. It is still reported today, in praise of divine protection at that time, that despite the many snakes that appeared everywhere from the newly broken ground, both large and small, they were spared the bite of the vipers. The people sent themselves into great privations, but the progress of the new settlement, which was to be built on as a communal economy, was not a prosperous one. According to Stephan's foolish orders, the people had to spend their time with roads and meadows, the most necessary work was missed and the outbreak of disease carried many off, since the small shelter did not provide sufficient protection. A great tabernacle [[Laubhütte](#)] had been erected for the service, but Stephan, not yet satisfied with all this, once exclaimed from the pulpit: "Things are bad with your church, and what is worse, your bishop must live in a pigsty." Not long ago, in the Hannover [Zeitblatt für kirchliche Angelegenheiten](#) [*Journal of Ecclesiastical Affairs*], the Missouri Synod was called a colony of Germany, and it was reproachfully concluded that the colony now considered itself strong enough to rebel against its German mother church (the state church?). Meanwhile, through this emigration the ties between the Saxon state church and the Lutherans settled in the American backwoods were thoroughly severed from the beginning. The Saxon emigrants had not left under wishes of happiness and blessings, as it happened with a Hermannsburg missionary colony when it set off on a journey to Africa. This Saxon emigration was also not the work of a prince. The noble King of Sweden, Gustav Adolph, had once drawn up great colonization plans for American settlements, but he did not see them carried out. Nevertheless, the first Swedes settled on the Delaware River in 1637, where Wilmington and Philadelphia now stand. Their pastor [John Campanius](#) translated Luther's catechism into the language of the Indians. Only 200 years later this

emigration took place, which was soon called a great fanaticism [*Schwärmerei*] not only in Germany but also within its own members, as soon as the castles in the air, which some had dreamed of, collapsed. Certainly the moral constraint with which Stephan burdened his followers must be abhorred. A time of disappointment had to come for the souls who had blindly confided in this man. Meanwhile, it was certainly an act of God that this man, as long as he worked in public in Dresden, was always seemingly innocent, despite the nasty rumors and despite the investigations that were initiated against him. If he had been exposed at that time, this emigration would undoubtedly have been stopped. God's great patience allowed Stephan to succeed until the settlement had taken root. Had he been allowed to settle in America, a monastic, closed communal economy would have been established under his rule, as several of these countries exist for this purpose and gradually wither away in their selfish, separatist activities. But it was to turn out quite differently from what [Stephan](#) had thought for himself. The sainted Pastor [Keyl](#) also writes in his diary that under God's doom, Stephan had to come all the way to America, because it was here that his sins and follies were revealed much more quickly than if he had stayed in Dresden. No sooner had he settled in Perry County than the tide turned! A turn of events had to come, for although Stephan and his peers did not find what they had set out for themselves, this America was to become a refuge for the faithful sons of the Reformation, and a new life of faith was to be established in the Lutheran Church, while in Germany the Lutheran Church was decaying more and more and was going to its grave. — Almost at the same time that the man was born whom God intended to be the Reformer of the Church in the old world, America was discovered in 1492; and in this nineteenth century, America was to open the gates to the Church of the Reformation, which in Europe is as in the dungeons.

Spiritually, the Saxons who immigrated to Missouri were to set up their tents in all North American states after several decades! God alone knows the multitudes of those who first entered this land as confused sheep, but who were now, through the ministry of purely Lutheran pastors, incorporated into the congregations of the Missouri Synod, led to the knowledge of the truth and to life from God. Stephan intended to make it evil, “but God meant it unto good” [[Joseph to his brothers, Gen. 50:20](#)], for God has chosen the despised, and no one shall snatch His elect from His hand!

II. [^](#)

Stephan's unmasking; [[Walther chosen to confront Stephan \(20\)](#); [W.'s first meeting with Stephan \(22\)](#)]; [Pastor Ferd. Walther's address to the congregation \(23\)](#); [[Council banishes Stephan \(24\)](#); [Settlement's hardships \(27\)](#); [Pastors reproached \(28\)](#); [Walther called to debate \(30\)](#); and the ensuing Perry County doctrinal battle]; [The Altenburg Colloquium \(32\)](#); [Walther's Altenburg Theses \(36\)](#); [Opposition to Church and Ministry \(42\)](#); [Wyneken's praise \(49\)](#);

After Stephan had left for Perry County, Pastor [Gotth Heinrich Loeber](#), [[pic](#)] who was distinguished by his thorough erudition and rich experience, took care of those who had stayed behind in St. Louis. He had been appointed by Stephan himself as his vicar. He belonged to the older ones among the Saxon preachers and on [Rogate Sunday](#) of the year 1839 he gave a serious sermon, which struck such a chord that some of the listeners, driven by their conscience, on the same day went to Pastor Loeber and made confessions to him, which contained a terrible revelation about Stephan's fleshly sins. It was strange that both persons confessed to Pastor Loeber at different hours and without having arranged to meet each other. It was evident that the deeply fallen Stephan drew these girls into his service for the first time, and even used the Word of God in order to seduce them into sin. The confessors promised, if necessary, to confirm under oath in court what they had confessed

before Pastor Loeber. While Pastor [Hermann Walther](#) had accompanied Bishop Stephan, so to speak as his chosen chaplain, to Perry County, the younger Pastor [Ferdinand Walther](#) (at that time, in contrast to the older brother, often called little Walther) had stayed behind in St. Louis with the other preachers and candidates, with the exception of Th. Brohm. It was this man, today's Prof. Dr. Walther, whom Pastor Loeber first consulted regarding these revelations, which only now revealed what the Dresden police had not been able to prove. Loeber was like that of the Apostle John, inclined to doubts, even now he was afraid that what he had experienced would be based on slander. On a walk that led them out to the city, Loeber began his opening to Ferd. Walther with the following words: "My dear Walther, I must tell you something in the deepest confidence, which I wish that the birds under the sky will neither hear nor take away." After Ferdinand Walther had heard everything, he immediately declared: "Not only the birds under the sky may hear this, the whole world must experience it. This is about the salvation of thousands, whom this hypocrite would lead even further, if he were not exposed, into eternal ruin. [It is morally impossible](#) that these poor girls should have made up what they claim to have done. If they were found to be liars, they would have no other chance than to be immediately excommunicated and expelled from our fellowship. — I also recognize in the revelations that have taken place a glorious answer to my prayer. Even last night in my camp I cried out to God in a fervent way that he would save me from the misery of my conscience, either by revealing to me the baselessness of my scruples about Stephan, so that I could calmly continue to follow him, or, if Stephan was a false spirit, by exposing him in such a way that I could leave him with a clear conscience." — Through these words Pastor Loeber was completely calmed down and freed from his doubts

as if the girls' messages could be lies and deceit. F. Walther further declared: "And if you all stay with Stephan, I will not go one step with him, not even if, as a result, I should die and perish in a ditch!" Then both promised each other not to leave each other and concluded their conversation under the holiest of affirmations, with a brotherly embrace, with hot tears. — The whole counsel of pastors and those who were at the head, then called the Council, were now summoned together. The rumor of Stephan's immoral change spread through the St. Louis congregation and it was devastating for all to suddenly have to regard a man, whom one had hitherto worshipped almost idolatrously, as a slave of vile lusts. The Council unanimously decided that the younger Pastor Walther should go to Perry County and, with the confessions signed by the girls in question in hand, publicly expose Bishop Stephan. This task was not a small one, because until then Stephan had always succeeded in portraying his accusers as slanderers.

[↑] [If a reader should ask](#) why just this youngest among the Saxon pastors was entrusted with this mission, it should first be pointed out that Ferd. Walther could not bring it over his conscience to take an oath of service and obedience to Bishop Stephan, although he had joined the emigration with a small group from his parish in Bräunsdorf. Walther was also already willing to protest against Stephan's appearance as a bishop as soon as he wanted to pretend to be a *jure divino* (by divine right) superior over the pastors. Walther had only seldom seen the Pastor Stephan in Saxony, but through a letter received of pastoral counsel, through which he had been freed from years of fear of conscience, he knew that he was indebted to him, as is reported in the following chapter of this writing. From the very beginning, Stephan had been unhappy to see Ferdinand

emigrate with his brother Hermann Walther. He feared the independence of the man, who, as it soon turned out, had a different spirit than Stephan. Already in Germany, Ferd. Walther had admitted to Stephan that he lacked personal trust in him. So that from then on, based on his knowledge of human nature, [he looked suspiciously at Walther](#) without him knowing it. When F. Walther had arrived in St. Louis, the candidate [Klügel](#), who had received the secret order from Stephan to keep a sharp eye on F. Walther was assigned to him as a room-mate. He felt more and more depressed, *) yet he was tormented by the concern that his doubts about Stephan's sincerity might be based on sinful suspicion, to which the thought came, where do you want to go if you leave these Stephanists? Are they not the most faithful confessors of the doctrines of our church? —

It was not a spiteful motive, but the love for the brethren that drove him to accept the order and to travel to Perry County in the week before Pentecost, unannounced and without first obtaining Stephan's permission (see above), [accompanied by a single man, a Saxon shoemaker's apprentice](#) [*Schuhmachersellen*]. Ferd. Walther was 28 years old at that time and when he entered this settlement for the first time, the crew of his steamboat knew nothing more than to indicate the mouth of the Obrazo [[Brazeau Creek](#)] as the place of his destination. Since he did not know the area, he did not know that he had arrived late in the evening at this landing place, rather he believed to have landed on the Illinois shore. For this reason he was put ashore somewhat ungently together with his companion by the boatmen. The steamboat left immediately

*) These words, along with other notes, are taken from a letter that the sainted Pastor [J. F. Buenger](#) wrote to the writer of this letter on December 28, 1881, shortly before his death. Since the then candidate Buenger traveled via New York, where several Lutherans had already immigrated elsewhere joined him, and only arrived in Perry County the week before Pentecost 1839, he too was saved from the folly of pledging obedience to Bishop Stephan in lieu of an oath.

on its way down the river and Walther, along with his companion, still believed that they had been mistakenly abandoned on the Illinois shore. Meanwhile they were closer to their goal than they thought. Since the present Wittenberg on the Mississippi River was not yet built, it was customary to light a fire in the evening near the landing; F. Walther and his companion now directed their steps towards this fire. The latter's courage was waning when they suddenly found themselves in the thickest darkness of the night at the bed of a river (the Obrazo), which in spring carries a considerable amount of water from the backwoods to the Mississippi. "Ah! Pastor! we are lost!" he exclaimed; but Walther replied: "No, this time we will reach our destination! He was aware of his calling. Quite unexpectedly, while groping around with his hands on the bank of the river, Walther got a rope in his hands, which led them to a little dinghy. Unconcerned, they let themselves into it, whereupon the dinghy started to sway so much that they were only kept intact above the deep river bed by a special preservation. When they reached the other side of the river, they soon found Bishop Stephan sitting around the fire among his faithful followers. [Stephan was astonished](#) by the unexpected visit. His guilty conscience might have been telling him something, but in the meantime, he sat down, saying to Walther, "See where you can stay this night," and hurried to his apartment. [[↑](#)] [The following day](#), Walther went not only to the elders, who administered the communal affairs and the treasury, but also to Stephan, to his dwelling. When he arrived there, he saw his brother Hermann, who had been taken into the home of an American, coming towards him. They embraced each other in front of Stephan's house, but before the conversation had got under way, the door went out and Hermann quickly pushed his brother Ferdinand into the house, so that he might negotiate the necessary things with Stephan himself. Stephan first expressed his indignation that Ferdinand Walther had appeared at the settlement without being called.

The latter replied first of all that in the St. Louis congregation there had been great dissatisfaction with this compulsion, as if it were forbidden to come to the settlement, and with other regulations according to which the workers were not allowed to engage themselves for more than a few days; the present state of affairs could not remain as it was. Stephan replied: “This is the fault of Loeber, he is a cowardly sissy, he is letting the people rise too far,” from which Ferdinand Walther defended his esteemed friend Loeber all the more warmerly, blatantly told Stephan the truth and left unceremoniously. With the sincere veneration with which people then had looked up to Stephan, [it was difficult to convince](#) the few members of the settlement which Ferd. Walther visited and informed of Stephan's case. [Theod. Brohm](#), who was there as a candidate, earnestly besought F. Walther with the request that he should stop believing and talking about his [Reverence](#) of such things, “you will be banished and cast out!” Brohm shouted to him. F. Walther replied: “It would be better to say: his [Unvenerable](#), I am glad to have finally cleared my conscience. The lawyer Dr. [Ad. Marbach](#), who until then had also blindly trusted Stephan, a strong man who had made many plans for the future, began to cry bitterly when Ferd. Walther handed him the confession signed by the two girls. Ferd Walther, however, lifted him up and showed him the right way to look at it with the words: “Now it will be good, because only now it will become clear that our emigration is a work of God, while we finally get rid of this tyrant of consciences.” [[↑](#)] Since Hermann Walther as Stephan's chaplain had to take care of [the sermon on Pentecost Monday](#), he handed over this sermon to his brother Ferdinand under the circumstances, while he himself preached at the landing place where a missionary post had been established (the present Wittenberg). The young pastor Ferd. Walther was well known to the listeners

who gathered under the great leafy canopy and God Himself confessed the Word, whose basic text contained the passage John 3:20: “Everyone practicing evil hates the light.” All the listeners noticed that there was an indication of a serious offence that was only now coming to light. Only now did the rumor of Stephan's disgraceful way of life penetrate through the whole settlement, and the fear of the St. Louis congregation that Stephan would still keep a large following and cause a great division in the congregation did not come true. The following Sunday, Stephan preached in the settlement, but found only two people listening. Already at this point he could see what a change of attitude had taken place. Ferdinand Walther had meanwhile returned from the settlement to St. Louis after his work and brought news of the present state of affairs. The greater part of the St. Louis emigration congregation set out on their journey and landed in two large boats in Wittenberg, accompanied by Ferdinand Walther. [↑] On the following day, the so-called Council (according to Stephan's order) decided on Stephan's fate. The members of the Council went to him to show him his grave crime. On the advice of some legal scholars, who admittedly were more familiar with Saxon civil law than with the local state law, Stephan was not only relieved of his office, but also declared to have lost his property and was expelled from the State of Missouri as compensation for the money he had taken out of the communal treasury and wasted ([he later obtained a replacement by court order](#) only for the confiscation of his private property). He was also subjected to a personal investigation and a large number of gold pieces were found in his stockings. — It was sad, however, that this man, with apparent indignation, rejected even the most obvious proofs of his guilt as lies and slander, stating that he had only secretly provided himself with money because he had already foreseen that he would be accused of treason and malice,

and that he would be cast out helplessly into the wide world. Thus he stood twice as gruesome as a stubborn denier of his guilt before the eyes of those who had given him their heart and trust for so long. — On the Illinois shore of the Mississippi is the so-called “Devil's Bake-Oven”, a dangerous cliff where many a ship has stranded; Stephan was lodged near this place for the time being. One of his female servants also followed him there. Pastor Loeber visited him again, accompanied by Candidate Brohm, and tried to lead Stephan to repentance, but in vain. Finally he preached in a small church on the Horse Prairie in Illinois. Plagued by terrible visions, Stephan died in 1847, in a severe agony, but without giving a sign of repentance.

The great majority of the emigrant congregation now took a different path. Only a few separated from the Saxon pastors and formed Donatistic conventicles in St. Louis, but the others listened to the voice that called the whole congregation to repentance. Especially Pastor Hermann Walther, who was gifted with a delicate mind and who was now appointed as their pastor by the St. Louis congregation, organized special penitential services in which the preachers presented themselves as the guiltiest, as they had also strengthened their leader in his security and tyranny, had fallen in many respects from God's Word to Stephan's Word because they, along with the listeners, wanted to put their trust in a man, made flesh their arm, and in a sectarian way to see the true Church of Christ in the Stephanist church fellowship! “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall!” 1 Cor. 10:12. This word was called out one to another in memory of Stephan. In order to correct the given scandal as much as possible before the whole world, the following revocation and public renunciation of Stephan was published in a public St. Louis newspaper, the [Anzeiger des Westens](#), on June 1, 1839:

"Only a few weeks ago, the undersigned felt urged to publicly contradict in these papers the many evil rumors that had been spread from Germany against our former Bishop Stephan, even here" (Stephan had been defended in the same paper soon after his arrival in St. Louis). — "Unfortunately, however, in the last few weeks we have had an experience which convinced us on the one hand that we had suffered ourselves to be shamefully deceived with respect to this man, and on the other hand filled our hearts with disgust and horror. Stephan is truly guilty of the secret sins of lust, infidelity and hypocrisy, and we ourselves were the ones to whom the unsolicited confessions have been made which expose him and of which we have now immediately informed others.

If we have now previously defended this man in ignorance and voluntary devotion, we now, since God has opened our eyes to this through his gracious guidance, publicly renounce the fallen. *)

We hope to God that He, who so far has so visibly taken care of our church and the church that emigrated with us, will avert all the harmful consequences of the great scandal that has occurred with us and others.

St. Louis, May 27, 1839.

Gotth. H. Loeber, Pastor

Ernst Gerh. Wilh. Keyl, Pastor

Ernst Moritz Bürger, Pastor

Carl Ferd. Wilh. Walther, Pastor

(also on behalf of her two absent ministers:)

Otto Hermann Walther, Pastor

Maximilian Oertel, Pastor

*) Since the pastors who accompanied Stephan to America were partly in the Mulde Valley and partly in the Saxon principalities, and had only rarely visited Stephan personally, it had been all the easier for him to surround himself with a false martyr's appearance and to portray the police prosecutions, from which Stephan apparently emerged without guilt,

[↑] The consequences of Stephan's fall and exposure were felt even more severely in the settlement in Perry County than in the St. Louis congregation. On the one hand the physical need began to press. The communal treasury was exhausted; the communal economy was dissolved and thus more freedom of movement was created, but it was difficult for the new settlers to clear the forest and make it tillable. With bleeding hands the Saxon weavers in the evening returned home from the fields and woods, and often strong men were laid out on their sickbeds when they overworked in the hot climate. During the hot season there was usually also a lack of water; it was only later that people began to hew deep cisterns into the rocks. Before that the cattle often withered away. Indeed, [Bürger writes in his book](#): "my wife and children did not have the drop of water in their feverish heat." All this, writes Pastor [J. F. Köstering](#), *) the present pastor in Altenburg, had to happen so that people would get rid of their trust in Man and throw themselves into the arms of God's gracious care. This care did not stay away for long. The experience of the godly Pastor Buenger's family was especially strengthening the faith. The parish widow Buenger had emigrated with seven children, one son was a physician, the present Altenburg physician, another was the candidate Buenger. The latter two did what they could to support themselves; but the dear widow's bright tears of melancholy ran down her cheeks when the children thought that they wanted to satisfy their hunger with roasted grains of corn, because the bread was gone. One of the brothers and sisters was sad, the others consoled themselves with the Word of God. And behold! the very same day as a suffering that he had to bear for Christ's sake. The suspicion, as if the pastors had known about Stephan's immoral change, can only come from malicious suspicion.

*) [The Emigration of the Saxon Lutherans, Their Settlement](#), etc. in St. Louis, published in second edition, contains the most important documents from that time.

an English-speaking man with a horse carrying a sack of flour rode up to the widow's house and asked if they needed flour. Of course they said yes! but added that no payment could be made at the moment. The man left the flour in the house, and the people promised to pay; but they could never pay for it, for although they did all the research and were later put into better circumstances, it was never possible to find out who the man was, the good angel in the time of trouble. [↑] But on the other hand, the heat of temptation pressed many hearts and consciences even harder than the outer heat of the sun. Worldly-minded people had indeed felt outwardly free and comfortable after Stephan's unmasking, but in this settlement there were many noble and serious-minded souls who wanted to become saved and remain faithful to the Lord Christ and His Church; Stephan had promised that here in this country one could preserve the sacred treasures of the Church for their children and children's children. But now spirits appeared, which said "We are deceived and must bear the shame that falls on Stephan, we are no longer a church at all, but a house fallen to pieces!" It was the pastors themselves who suffered most from the mistrust that now took hold of their minds. They were reproached at first that they should have seen through Stephan's goings-on earlier, and instead they had joined in the hierarchical way, because the whole emigration was a sinful step, and so they, the preachers, also ran away from their congregations in Saxony, they had no call here in America, emigration was pure devil's work. One began to denounce the validity of the official pastoral acts, because the romanizing Stephanism had changed into [Donatism](#). If one had believed until then that the visible church of Stephan was the only true church in the present, only through Stephan and the Stephanistic preaching ministry was the grace of God offered and the pure doctrine guaranteed, and only those who obey this ministry form the host of Christ and with this ministry together the church, then

they did not know now, where salvation and grace would still be found. Although Stephan had taught, and added to his church order that no man could transfer the office (as if there were no mediated calling by the congregation!), that the office would endure even if no one should accept the preached Word, it was nevertheless, in spite of this hierarchical doctrine, this highly praised office, which according to that teaching was to give full power and validity to the Word and the holy sacrament, which had fallen together with Stephan, and there were people there who doubted whether the church of Christ, with its treasures and means of grace, was still present with them. *) Some felt like abandoned sheep without a shepherd, but others, like Dr. Vehse, Gust. Jaekel and Ferd. Fischer wrote a paper of protestation in which they complained that the spiritual priesthood of the Christians was being neglected and that the rights of the congregation were not being properly respected. The ministers and candidates got into a deep crisis of conscience at this state of affairs, most of them believed in their former form of church government in Saxony and had to turn back. They also published an apology and a renunciation of Stephan in the *[Pilgrim from Saxony](#)*, a church magazine still published in Leipzig today. Even Pastor H. Loeber staggered in these storms and was already dealing with the thought of resigning his office in Altenburg. The most detailed description was by Pastor [E. M. Bürger](#) [[pic](#)] who describes his state of mind in his *[Open Letter to the Evangelical Lutheran Church](#)*. Although he took up his ministry on the first Sunday in Advent 1840 with the consent of his congregation in [Seelitz](#) (near Altenburg in Perry County), and was thus rightly called, he suspended himself again, and refused to celebrate Holy Communion for some time, because he again had doubts whether he could regard his call as divine. So it was even less surprising that even sincere

*) Pastor Ferd. Walther had never understood this concept of church, as the following will enlighten us.

church members doubted their state of grace and went astray. Previously, under Stephan, the testimony from the mouth of the ordained preacher and the visible membership in the orthodox church was considered to be a main part and witness of Christianity, now they no longer knew where this true church was, because the head of the pastors, in whom they believed to have the chief mark of the true church, had fallen with his whole church system. Therefore, the Christians had a moral dilemma as to whether they could take part in the public services, and the whole newly established church system, without sin. More and more often, the disputes moved from right to left and the whole settlement threatened to dissolve into individual separatist groups. Pastor M. Buerger also kept himself separate at that time, but he took the right path again by working towards a theological discussion about the disputed points between the pastors, candidates and a lay member, as he writes on [page 41 of his book](#). By the latter is undoubtedly meant the skilful lawyer Dr. [Adolph Marbach](#) from Dresden, who confronted Pastor [Ferd. Walther](#) at that important disputation until the testimony of truth, which he gave with convincing clarity, won the day. Accordingly, Pastor F. Walther on the one hand and Dr. Marbach from Dresden on the other hand were elected as colloquents. — [[↑](#)] What is perceived in the life of nations, that especially in times of misfortune men rise up through whom God sends help, is also reflected in the history of the Christian Church. The men whom God has chosen as His instruments must then come to light and, when the need is greatest, grow with the strength that God has entrusted to them. It was also God's providence that the same man who had already preceded him in the unmasking of Stephan should come back to the scene when the church upheaval wanted to tear apart all ties. The German (now deceased) R. [Hoffmann](#) writes in his pamphlet: [The Missouri Synod in](#)

[North America, Gütersloh 1881](#)" [no lending library in the USA as of 2019], from that time: "In this distress, when they believed that they were no longer a Christian congregation at all, but a congregation that had broken apart, lost in time and eternity, it was one man who saved them, the aforementioned Ferd. Walther." [See Hochstetter's 1882 *LuW* review of this essay [here](#), translated [here](#)] The congregation lacked a firm doctrinal foundation, which is why their hearts could not become firm until they were secured in the truth of God's Word. Already under Stephan it was mostly fear that dominated many minds; it was said at that time: He who does not stand with us does not belong to the Church, he lies under the wrath of God! Now it was said: "We have stood by Stephan, and so we have shared in his errors and sins; the ruin in which we lie is too great for a reformation to take place within our community! While this side was causing the consciences of many to become so confused that they were happy to claim guilt when it was said that all your Christianity was no good, Pastor Ferd. Walther was against it. He endeavored to prove from God's Word and to confirm from the testimonies of the Lutheran Confessions that nevertheless, even in corrupt churches despite all abuses, Christians were present. Therefore a Christian congregation was also present, because the believing children of God make up the Church, not the wicked, not even the persistent false teachers! On the other hand, wherever efforts are made to put an end to abuses and to establish the true teaching office of the ministry, there is also a Lutheran Church, because the pure Word of God and the unadulterated administration of the sacraments are the only characteristics of the true Church. Thirdly, there is no doubt that the congregation has the right and duty to establish the public ministry of preaching in its midst, for it (the congregation) is the bearer and owner of all spiritual goods, and therefore, according to divine order, it has the power to entrust those who are capable of administering these graces and goods to the public administration, and such a call emanating from the congregation is certainly valid and pleasing to God. He said that the church, according to the VII and VIII articles of the Augsburg

Confession is the assembly of all believers and therefore also does not consist in a pope or bishop or in a special class of ordained persons, that also the call into the ministry is not made by a special class of persons, also not by means of the outward act of ordination, but by the whole congregation which, because it possesses the spiritual priesthood, has also from the beginning and without means (according to the Smalcald Articles) received the spiritual power of the keys from God. Of this divine right to call the Smalcald Articles teach the following: "For where the Church is, there is ever the command to preach the Gospel; therefore the churches must retain the power to demand, elect and ordain ministers; and such power is a gift which is actually given to the churches by God and cannot be taken away by any human power of the church!" [[From the German; Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, § 67](#)]

[↑] In April 1841, the above-mentioned disputation in Altenburg took place in the newly built college blockhouse in front of many listeners. Pastor Ferd. Walther had written a public open letter for this discussion, which finally resulted in eight Theses (doctrinal statements), by which the doctrinal battle that had broken out was victoriously decided. Since [Pastor Koesterling's book, pp. 42-54](#), contains a literal section from this open letter, the following is reported:

"Because the wretched are troubled and the poor groan, I will arise, says the Lord; I will create a help, that they may teach with confidence," so it says, my dear brethren, in Ps. 12:6. According to the testimony of our theologians, this promise was fulfilled in the most glorious way, especially at the time of the Reformation. Certainly, however, we too may confess to the glory of the merciful and long-suffering and patient God that this dear promise has also begun to be fulfilled in us wretched and poor people. We were disturbed and were troubled; many sighed and over many there was sighing, and behold — the Lord, without all our merit and worthiness, began to create a help of which we were not aware.

God removed a great disturber from among us, to whom we had entrusted ourselves against God's will as a guide to heaven. But what would have become of us if God had not continued to take care of us? — The wretched were still being disturbed, and the poor were still sighing" — — — In the following, he acknowledges with heartfelt thanks of that writing of Dr. Vehse, Fischer and Jaekel which was already mentioned, and which was initially viewed with distrust by most of the Saxon preachers. — But what now arouses concern in Pastor Walther is mainly two things: First of all, several of us are now trying to completely blur the difference between the seducers and the seduced. Do we not often demand of the seduced that they confess a guilt that rests only on the seducers? Do not many simple-minded souls have a conscience about errors of which only the private secretaries of Stephan were aware? Do we not often paint the picture of the most shameful Stephanist clubs, and then cry out: this is the church that you make up? — Do we not often treat those who bleed under the scourge of conscience of the Stephanists as if they were not much better than those who cruelly wielded this scourge over them? Do we not often demand of the simple-minded a knowledge and confession of sins of which they cannot be guilty? Does one not often make a particularly high degree of recognition of sin a condition of grace and salvation? Is it not often the case that we seek to suspiciously guard among us all our previous Christian experiences and the certain effects of grace of the Holy Spirit as horrible self-deceptions, simply because at that time we did not yet see through our seducers? — If we add to this the condition of our congregations, which are used to being beaten and frightened, then it is not difficult to get people to admit everything, including sin, that they are not yet convinced of in their consciences, in order to avoid being considered stubborn and impenitent. Oh, a grain of true poverty of spirit is worth more

than a thousand talents of head-knowledge of sin! Matthew 9:36 [*sic - was 9:26*]: ‘But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.’ The second thing that causes me great concern is that several of us are now making it clear, either as a matter of concern or as a foregone conclusion, that there is no Christian church, nor congregation, nor ministry, nor right sacrament, nor divine absolution, nor call, nor spiritual priesthood among us. So we are not only denied that there is still a Lutheran church here, but also that there is a Christian congregation at all and that the goods of the Church are not administered here. Far be it from me from wanting to make someone's scruples into sin, but we should at least not make those who do not share these scruples dismayed by stormy excuses. — It is a very unfortunate thing to reveal mere reservations to everyone without need. This is why Luther said in his 1528 letter on re-baptism: ‘For Satan also now does nothing else through the enthusiasts (die Schwaermer) except to bring forth all kinds of uncertain things, thinking it is sufficient if he is able to speak proudly and scornfully of us, as the Sacramentarians do. No one wants to make sure about his presumptions and prove them, but they devote all their efforts to make our understanding suspect and uncertain. *Suspiciones docent, non fidem*, (they teach conjectures, not faith), and then call it Scripture and Word of God. The devil strikes into dust, and would like to create a fog before our eyes, so that we should not see the light; and in the fog he presents nothing but will-o'-the wisps to us, in order to deceive us. That is to say, because they have formed their opinion they exercise themselves to pull the Scripture by the hair in order to make it agree with that opinion.’ So far Luther.

It is even more irresponsible than publication and revealing of such scruples if one passes off doubt as truth and downright denies the validity of the baptisms carried out among us two years ago, absolutely denies the divinity of the absolution now spoken, etc. — Of such

activities Luther testifies: ‘It is a sin and tempting God to teach uncertain delusion as sure truth; such a one is as much a denier as one who publicly speaks against the truth, for he speaks what he himself does not know, nevertheless he wants it accepted as truth.’ So far Luther. — The clearer it has now become from day to day for me how the plague of sin-seeking and the domination of conscience will creep in among us anew, and how great the danger is that most souls will be thrown into the abyss of doubt about everything, that all solid foundation will be made unsteady, that all the certainty and power and validity of the divine means of grace and ordinances are made dependent on human worthiness, that if one continues in this way, we can finally all nowhere and never become certain whether we have received the true sacraments, whether we have messengers of Christ or of the devil before us, whether we are in a Christian or in a heathen congregation, in the church or in an idolatrous temple, whether we can be saved in any fellowship or not. The clearer it became to me that the danger of such a confusion of conscience was increasing daily among us, the more irresistible it became in me the desire to contribute something to the control of this unspeakable misery and to place many a now restless and timid conscience on the immovable foundation of the divine Word! It was this desire that prompted me to send the present letter to you, my dear brethren in Christ, etc. The purpose is not to justify myself or the whole congregation in all points. No — it is about this: I want to defend myself against making the sins of individuals into the sins of all; — not making the harlots, rogues and school of lies the core of our entire community; that people may not say, they were all in it, but on the contrary, this school of Satan had been in our Christian congregation. I want to show what a great difference it is whether a church is purified or whether it is called a true church, that such a church can be very corrupt and still be called a true congregation.

I do not want to show that the dyed-in-the-wool Stephanists and the unconverted among us were the Church, or that they truly belonged to the Church, but that it was precisely the most simple, the least respected, who were the main persons among us, and that "they constituted the Church." I want to help that these so often despised children of God are no longer overlooked among us, but that we know that we have all, so to speak, lived by their grace. I want to defend against the idea that we finally nowhere can be steady and nowhere can we be sure whether we are Christians, whether we are Lutherans, whether we are in a Christian congregation, whether we are called to join in the calling and establish the divine worship or not, whether we hear a messenger of God or the devil, whether we are called by the synagogue of Satan or by the church of Christ, whether we remain in our office or have to leave it, whether we are against God or whether we fight for Him, yes, whether we are baptized or not. I want to prevent the terrible madness from taking hold among us, as if the power and validity of the Word and God's interventions were based on man's truthfulness and worthiness. I want to defend that even the clearest things are not made dark, the most certain things doubtful, the lightest things difficult, and the clearest things inexplicable and insoluble. So here it is a matter of appeasing consciences, of warding off false doctrine that tries to creep in under the guise of humility, — — it is not a matter of honour and justification for any man, but of God's honour; it is a matter of whether He is faithful, even if we become unfaithful. — [↑] The decision of the points in dispute among us is mainly based on the correct application of several points in the doctrine of the Church, ecclesiastical authority, call, office, banishment, heresy, etc. The doctrines themselves, from which the application to the present circumstances was then made, in this letter were based on the Word of God and confirmed by the testimonies of the Confessions and the Lutheran teachers. The eight doctrines established by this are as follows: [[Concordia Cyclopedia](#)]

§ 1.

The true Church, in the most perfect sense, is the totality (*Gesamtheit*) of all true believers, who from the beginning to the end of the world, from among all peoples and tongues, have been called and sanctified by the Holy Ghost through the Word. And since God alone knows these true believers (2 Tim. 2:19), the Church is also called invisible. No one belongs to this true Church who is not spiritually united with Christ, for it is the spiritual body of Jesus Christ.

§ 2.

The name of the true Church also belongs to all those visible societies in whose midst the Word of God is purely taught and the holy Sacraments are administered according to the institution of Christ. True, in this Church there are also godless men, hypocrites, and heretics, but they are not true members of the Church, nor do they constitute the Church.

§ 3.

The name Church, and in a certain sense the name true Church, also belongs to such visible societies as are united in the confession of a falsified faith and therefore are guilty of a partial falling away from the truth, provided they retain in its purity so much of the Word of God and the holy Sacraments as is necessary that children of God may thereby be born. When such societies are called true Churches, the intention is not to state that they are faithful, but merely that they are real Churches, as opposed to secular organizations [*Gemeinschaften*].

§ 4.

It is not improper to apply the name Church to heterodox societies, but that is in accord with the manner of speech of the Word of God itself. And it is not immaterial that this high name is granted to such societies, for from this follows : (1) That members also of such societies may be saved; for without the Church there is no salvation.

§ 5.

2) That the outward separation of a heterodox society from the orthodox Church is not necessarily a separation from the universal Christian Church or a relapse into heathenism and does not yet deprive that society of the name Church.

§ 6.

3) Even heterodox societies have church power; even among them the treasures of the Church may be validly dispensed, the ministry established, the Sacraments validly administered, and the keys of the kingdom of heaven exercised.

§ 7.

Even heterodox societies are not to be dissolved, but reformed.

§ 8.

The orthodox Church is to be judged principally by the common, orthodox, and public confession to which the members acknowledge themselves to have been pledged and which they profess.

A few years later, Pastor A. Schieferdecker, who witnessed this disputation, can be heard in a synodical convention address as District President: "It did not take more than this to free the consciences from severe distress, to raise up the already almost sunken faith in many hearts again and to make it come alive as if from death. It was the Easter day of our hard tested congregations, where they saw the Lord again as once the disciples did, and were filled with joy and hope in the light of his grace and in the power of his resurrection. There are still many here present who certainly remember this day with tears of thanksgiving to the merciful God. There are still present here some of the faithful warriors who fought for the cause of Christ and his poor, torn flock, including the dear brother (Walther), whom God needed as the most noble instrument in his cause. As important and meaningful as the

Leipzig Disputation of 1519 (Luther with Eck) became for the Reformation, so important — I dare say confidently — this Disputation held here (in Altenburg) at that time has become for the whole subsequent formation and shaping of our Lutheran Church here in the West (of America). What was won and conquered at that time as the jewel of truth has proven its worth in all the subsequent battles our Synod has fought." (see pages [53 and 54 in Pastor Koesterling's book](#)) — Pastors G. H. Loeber and E. G. W. Keyl were also filled with new joyfulness as a result of the happy ending of this religious discussion. They were well aware of the fact that the Lutheran pastor in his spiritual office needs no other power than the power of the Word, for the power of God to save does not lie in one's own strength or worthiness, but only in the Gospel. The sainted Pastor Loeber writes of this: "Because our pastors had already made sufficient confessions of their sins before that public meeting and had purified themselves before God and men because of the sins they had committed, their present congregations had no hesitation in formally calling them to the spiritual pastoral ministry and recognizing them as their rightful shepherds. And so, under the good hand of God, the various temptations and frictions, through which the enemy had undoubtedly thought nothing else but to drive us away, had to serve us to serve us for our good, so that we learned to remember God's Word and Luther's doctrine even better, and our consciences were cleansed of many previously unrecognized sins and fortified against all kinds of doubts, while many erring persons were counselled and the weak and fearful were comforted. But not all of them wanted to be counseled and corrected, but some went their own ways after that and no longer walked with us. — In the newly settled Saxon congregations it was now recognized that the exercise of the church government, i.e. the power to set and order everything that promotes and serves the administration of the Word of God and the holy sacraments — according to divine

right belongs to each individual congregation; it was known that the churches are the sole property of the Lord Christ, who said: "one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren", Matt. 23:8; that they therefore did not need to inquire of to any human person or authority (be they called pope or bishop, or whatever a so-called higher church government may call itself), as if they were first and foremost subject to such an authority and then only to the Lord Christ. For Christ the Lord wants to remain the only mediator and says Matt. 18:20: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." The same Christ also gives, as the Smalcald Articles say on the basis of this passage, the highest judgment to the congregation with the words; "Tell it unto the church", Matt. 18:17.

Since it is not uncommon in Germany, in particular, to think that these doctrines, which are certainly scriptural, would undermine all order in the Church, and that an arbitrary majority rule in the Church would be brought about, it must be briefly noted that in the congregations of Saxony, this new arrangement of things has brought about peace and order and a very pleasant relationship between the pastors and their congregations. After the congregations had gained the right understanding of the freedom they have in Christ, of their spiritual rights and duties, they also began to make the right God-pleasing use of the spiritual power which Christ gave not only to the ministers, but also to His Church on earth (as the Small Catechism already teaches).

The settlement in Perry County was divided into delimited parishes. Altenburg, which grew up fastest to become a village, now definitely called Pastor H. Loeber; Frohna together with Wittenberg called Pastor E. G. W. Keyl; in Dresden and Johannisberg Pastor Ferd. Walther had been stationed until then. Pastor Bürger preferred to leave for Germany, but was detained on the way there in the city of

Buffalo, where a small congregation whose beginnings had been gathered by Pastor Krause, who had returned to Germany at the time (Silesians and incoming Pomeranians), was left without a preacher and had been pressed from the beginning into opposition to Pastor Grabau. After careful consideration and only after he had also visited and heard Pastor Grabau, Pastor Buerger accepted the call of this Lutheran congregation in Buffalo. Pastor Oertel, who was very unhappy with the new circumstances, left Perry County during the summer, his former parishioners joined the other parishes, but he himself later became a full Roman Catholic and worked in New York as a bigoted papal servant at a Catholic newspaper. A new addition, however, was the parish of [Pastor C. F. Gruber](#), from Reust in the Duchy of Altenburg. The same one landed in Wittenberg shortly before Christmas with 141 Lutherans, and with them they built the village of [Paitzdorf](#). — A rich Christian life blossomed in these congregations in which the pastors built on the one cornerstone, namely Christ; it became more and more evident that the true Church, precisely where one lives one's [faith](#), also appears visibly, because it says: “[I believed, therefore have I spoken](#).” [Ps. 116:10] Christians recognized that the pure Word of God was also familiar to them, that they should profess it. Church discipline and eventually the ban were exercised according to the words of Christ, Matt. 18:15-18, against manifest and wilful sinners in such a way that it was not necessary to use the arm of the secular government, as it was believed in the German state churches to be necessary. The forest which they had cleared amid manifold hardships for cultivation now rang with the voice of the Lord! Psalms 29:8-9. For some time the Saxon Lutherans had to be scolded by the world as Stephanists, but in the face of this disgrace, which they no longer deserved, what Christ the Judge sings of the Christians was fulfilled in them:

It shines in the Christian's inner life,
Although they are burnt by the sun on the outside;
What the King of Heaven gave them
Is known to none but themselves.
What nobody feels,
What nobody touches,
Decorated their enlightened senses,
And led them to divine dignity.

Although the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Missouri Synod took place only six years after that Altenburg Disputation, it was nevertheless rightly noted that the entire Missouri Synod was based on the same doctrinal foundation on which the Saxon congregations had built up from that time on. It cannot be a source of dishonour for this synod that it has held fast without wavering to the Word of God and to our scriptural Confession also in the doctrine of the Church and of the holy Ministry. [↑] Nevertheless, until the most recent times there are no lack of opponents of these doctrines, because, as [Dr. A. Brömel](#) remarks in an essay, there is a Catholic [[Dr. Fred Kramer participated in outside doctrinal discussions, with Roman Catholics on “Papal Primacy” in 1974.](#)] (hierarchical) procession through the world; "they want to bring us a Lutheran hierarchy that is diametrically opposed to the old Protestant view." In the same way that the Jesuits present the Reformation as a rebellion and revolution, the Missouri Synod is now accused by the people on that side of being unbiblical and un-Lutheran radicalism and independentism. They say that because here in this country "the curb of the state is missing", so the civil conditions of North America were taken into account, and the democratic desires were yielded to by the fact that the Missouri constitution transfers church government and the power of the keys to the individual congregation! This is also the reproach of the late [R. Hoffmann](#), who must confess that one must not only acknowledge without bias the external blessing God has given this Lutheran Synod, but also the reverence with which the Missouri Synod upheld the sacred treasures of Old Lutheran doctrine! [Wilh. Rohnert](#) speaks similarly, who

believes that the Missouri Synod borrowed [Hoefling's](#) theory of ministry, *) but finally concludes his very one-sided and erroneous account with the words: "the exclusively Lutheran direction of the Synodical Conference has been a great blessing for America" — Should this stance, which holds the Old Lutheran doctrine as a sacred treasure (because it is founded in the Holy Scriptures) indeed be comfortable with democratic desires? Should Dr. Walther's effectiveness really be destructive, revolutionary, libertarian, etc., as Pastor Grabau portrayed him in Germany and everywhere else? How does the concession of beneficial effectiveness fit with the accusation that Missouri doctrine and practice must undermine the Lutheran Church? One can see from the history of the Saxon emigration that after the unmasking of Stephan, a disintegration of the congregation and a revolution threatened, and this [Donatism](#) and rapturous fanaticism, which wanted to reject church and the preaching ministry, was, as demonstrated above, averted by Dr. Walther's effectiveness at the right time! Walther did not act in the manner of a church politician; such a politician would have said: we want to make concessions to the dissatisfied and introduce a new church order! Walther went into the Holy Scripture, and showed from it and from the testimonies of the Confessions that it is not the external bond of a constitution by which the true church is held together, that the true church as the assembly of all believers is not bound, like an external government, to this or to that country, also not to this or to that minister, also not to an organized synod, yes, not even to the name Lutheran; but that Christ's church is recognized and visibly appears

*) That the symbolic doctrine of the Missouri Synod is very different from Hoefling's theory was proved by Prof. Walther partly in his travel report from Germany, where he visited and refuted Prof. Hoefling, partly from the [Buffalo Colloquium](#) in November 1866. One should therefore refer to later reports.

where the doctrine of Christ is in progress and in use. Where the word and the holy sacraments are not found at all, there is certainly no Church; but while these means of grace are still present, there are certainly children of God, even if only a few! It is the spiritual treasures which, according to Christ's will, gather, maintain and spread the church of God; it is the spiritual fellowship of the Word and the Sacrament which distinguishes the Church from every secular community and constitution. Dr. Walther recognized that the spiritual power of the Word is strong enough to rebuild the Church in this very country, independent of the state, according to the genuine evangelical principles of the Reformation.

Soon after settling into his small Perry County parish, he fell ill with a malignant, nervous bilious fever, the aftermath of which was a persistent intermittent fever, and now went to see his brother-in-law, the sainted Pastor E. G. W. Keyl, who had brought a rich library from Germany. In the few hours without fever, he immersed himself in the study of Luther and recognized that the thing that made Luther so strong in his struggles, whereby he not only resisted the Pope but also stood firm against Zwingli, Calvin and the enthusiasts, was Luther's faith in the Bible and Luther's abhorrence of all hierarchism in the church. Luther did not ask about the council decisions and opinions of the Roman teachers, who are today again praised as authorities, nor did he wait until a council would have spoken, which the emperor and the humanists of his time were recommending; Luther also did not ask whether a doctrine was offensive to reason and the heart, as Zwingli did, and deviated from the Word of the Scriptures; Luther well knew that the Holy Scripture is the only source, rule and guideline of faith, therefore God's Word alone should provide him with articles of faith, as he testified in the Smalcald Articles. When Ulrich von Hutten offered him bodily help against the spiritual tyrants, he replied: "The world is overcome by the Word, the church is preserved by the Word, the church will also

be rebuilt by the Word! The Saxon preachers saw themselves without human assistance, when it seemed that with Stephan's downfall all trust had also fallen away! All human support and authority had sunk away, and Walther began to cast light on the decayed conditions with the same light which Luther had once resorted, with the light of Holy Scripture! Therefore, “back to Luther, for whoever goes back to Luther will be led into the Holy Scriptures! His teaching is nothing but the everlasting gospel!” This is what Walther proclaims in summary, again in the name of the newly constituted Missouri Synod in 1849, [in the Foreword to the fifth volume of *Der Lutheraner*](#). *)

If the church of Christ were a visible earthly kingdom, it would be essential and original, consisting of a commanding and an obeying state, divided into spiritual authority and subjects. Now, according to the Catechism, the Church is nothing other than the congregation of the true believers and saints scattered throughout the world, who are under one Head, namely Christ. Therefore the Church is the spiritual body of Christ, the Kingdom of Heaven of our Heavenly King, invisible in its nature, recognizable by the pure Word and Sacrament, which is not governed by human statutes and ordinances, but only by the Word and Spirit of Christ. According to Art. VII of the Augsburg Confession, the Church confesses in the same sense that she has always been and always will be present, and that all believers belong to her. It follows that the particularistic and Romanizing doctrine according to which our Evangelical Lutheran Church, as it has been historically present in the world for only 350 years, is not meant under the Church in Art. VII of the Augsburg Confession. Rather, the Augsburg Confessors also want to testify in this article

*) Dr. Walther writes in the preface to the book on [Church and Ministry \[p. viii\]](#): "We have not modelled the doctrine of our Church on our own circumstances, but have ordered it according to the doctrine of our Church. Whoever doubts this, we confidently call out to him: “Come and see”

to their ecumenical, truly Catholic faith by stating that they do not profess to the adherence to the Pope, but to the universal Christian Church, for this Church, to which only truly believers, but also all believers of all times and all countries from the rising to the setting of the sun belong, this Church is the right one! Since there is no such church of pure believers in outward appearance, but rather hypocrites and godless people are always mixed in with them, Article VIII of the Augsburg Confession refuses to accept this, as if the means of grace were not effective and valid if they were administered by a godless person who does not belong to the Church. Such persons dispense in the stead of Christ, and not for their own persons, as the Apology says. But although the Church is never completely purified from the admixture of hypocrites and evil Christians in earthly life, these are not members of the Church! The gathering of all true believers can also only be a spiritual gathering, because here the Roman view of believers does not apply, which under the Church means all those who obey the Pope, not even all those who listen, but the true believers who are cling to Christ through the Holy Spirit and faith. — Very important is also the [second part of Art. VII – Of the Church](#): “And to the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. Nor is it necessary that human traditions, that is, rites or ceremonies, instituted by men, should be everywhere alike. As Paul says.... Eph. 4:5-6.” In the state churches, where the Church is essentially understood as a visible institute, the opposite of this sentence now applies, as if to say: "It is not necessary for us to teach in harmony. Everyone can teach what and how he wants, as long as he does not punish false doctrine (which is on an equal footing with the truth)! It is enough, therefore, to be obedient to the supreme government of the Church and to the Bishop of the country, observing its statutes, and to be conformable to others in human ceremonies. This is where

the wrong concept of the church leads. It substitutes a hollow building in place of the spiritual temple built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets and the One Cornerstone of Christ.

Since the entire Article VII resists the sectarian narrow-mindedness which the Church wants to turn into a visible particular church (such as the Roman one), the important words it is enough, and so on, are to indicate the Christian freedom of those who truly believe in Christ. However beautiful and lovely some ceremonies and ecclesiastical customs may be, the use or non-use of them must not be made a sin, and so pastors, too, must not act contrary to Christian freedom when they wish to introduce such ceremonies or liturgical customs. In the area of the free church, too, distraction and bitterness have often been caused by the unevangelical urgency and coercion of some ministers. Finally, the particular form of the constitution, the synod ordinances and the like also belong among those things which are not necessary for the true unity of the Church. It is a common experience in this country that even those who consider themselves good Lutherans substitute the interest they take in their Synod for the spiritual edification of the Body of Christ; human party-pushing, often accompanied by jealousy and ambition, makes the dividing walls which rise between the various Synods ever higher. Sectarians and mere name Lutherans are always much more strict about the constitutional form in which they are registered or parish priests, and about some of their favourite statutes, "instituted by men", than about the right unified faith!

According to the [Large Catechism of Luther](#), the meaning and summary of the article "[Of the Church](#)" as the communion of saints is: "I believe that there is upon earth a little holy group and congregation of pure saints, under one head, even Christ, called together by the Holy Ghost." It follows from this that these saints under their One Head and Master have only one status

as Christians and that they originally and immediately proclaim the ministry, the goodness of the One who called them from darkness to light: to carry on, confess and preach the Word which they have accepted in faith. This congregation of the faithful, which is undivided by its very nature, is the bride and the honor of Christ's house; without distinguishing between so-called laymen and clergymen, the congregation as such is the holy Church of Jesus hidden in the visible crowd of the called, the true owner and bearer of all heavenly goods, rights, offices and powers that Christ gave to His Church. Because Christ dwells and reigns invisibly in the hearts of his believers, only Christocracy [not democracy] practiced by the Word and the Holy Spirit takes place here. [R. Hoffmann](#) misunderstands the whole situation, because he thinks that the dark side of the Missouri Synod is the democratic constitution, according to which one has "transferred" church government and the Office of the Keys to each individual congregation. But here nothing is to be transferred by people in the first place, but only to confess what the true Christians as spiritual priests and kings already originally have from Christ. *) It is therefore not merely a constitutional issue that is at stake! The difference between the neo-Lutheran Romanists and the real Old Lutherans lies in the answer to the question: with whom is the original spiritual power, the power of the keys, which includes all church government? Is this power given by Christ to his Church on earth, or does it originally belong to a pope, a special higher church government, or similar privileged status? Pastor Grabau attributed this power

*) Smalcald Articles. [[Tractate concerning the power and primacy of the Pope](#) (§ 24), from [the German](#) translated:] "In the same way as the promise of the Gospel belongs to the whole Church without any means (*principaliter et immediate*, original and immediate), so also the keys belong to the whole Church without any means, because the keys are nothing else than the ministry (*Amt*), and therefore such a promise, is communicated to anyone who desires it."

exclusively to the doctrine, and although a church or congregation must first exist before a church government or synod or consistory can meet, the congregation of the saints is nevertheless to be burdened only with the object or goal from which and on which the so-called church government is to work, and at least the church as a whole or the state church is to be placed as a legal authority or spiritual authority over the congregations. Meanwhile the congregations have received their spiritual power not through the Church as a whole, but through and from Christ, and the Smalcald Articles confess that every congregation has such a command from God. Even if only two or three Christians were gathered together in Jesus' name, they have command and power from Him to deliver the public sermon. Matt. 18:20 and 1 Peter 2:9 are given as basis and proof because the spiritual power is principally with the Christians as spiritual priests, it cannot be with the pope or the bishops alone. If even the Apostle Paul says that he administers the keys for the sake of the faithful, in Christ's place, 2 Cor. 2:10, today's ministers of the Church need not be ashamed of this either. The Saxon pastors have also experienced that it brings more blessings to be called for the sake of the congregation, as Luther writes, than by Stephan. The official priestly pride, which creeps into the heart of the preacher by virtue of hierarchical principles, is much more dangerous and much more to be feared than the so-called "spiritual priesthood", a frightening image, with the best help of which our genuinely evangelical doctrine of the Holy Church and ministry is often rejected without examination. A spiritual priesthood is a contradiction in itself, because spiritual priests do not want to rule but serve the Lord and His Church; they legitimize themselves as spiritual priests only by the fact that their actions are founded in the Word of God; they surrender themselves, together with their pastor who has to administer the public service, to the Word of God and let themselves be shown the way they have to go as Christians. The

The Church, as our confession also teaches, is the little sheep that hear the voice of their shepherd! Where only the word of the Supreme Shepherd of Jesus is heard and accepted, where the flock of the Lord knows the voice and hears the voice of no stranger in the voice of the shepherd, then for this reason, but only for this reason, it will gladly and willingly obey the servant of Christ, through whom the mouth of the Lord and Supreme Shepherd speaks to it. Where all are kings, that is, in matters of faith directly under Christ, there can certainly be no talk of one individual lordship over the others; where all are brethren, there is only one master, Christ! — [\[↑\]](#) “What would have been gained,” exclaims the sainted [[F. C. D.](#)] [Wyneken](#) in the Synodical Address of 1852 [[LCMS files](#) p. 201, 205 [↑](#); [German & English text](#)], “if a legal submission to a human authority, displeasing to God, had been forced, but not the Godly, inner, willing obedience of a heart born of God had been achieved. It would also be easy for us to catch our consciences and force them into external obedience, and to establish discipline and order in a way more comfortable for the flesh.” — “It is precisely our correct and Scriptural doctrine,” it further states, “that represents the office of the ministry in its right, high and divine dignity. For this dignity does not consist in exercising an external authority over the congregation, which would be the privilege of the minister as a class, and would force the obedience of a servant, but in the dignity of the minister, which is alive and strong, fresh and joyful in the power of the Word moves in the midst of the congregation, pouring out the heavenly blessings that the Lord has placed in His Word, and introducing the souls entrusted to Him more and more into the knowledge and blessed enjoyment of the freedom of the children of God from law, sin, death and the devil. In this way also the love of the child of God, moving in the glorious freedom, learns to accept, tolerate and carry everything that does not go against faith.” — As Christians, the members of the church will always be concerned that their pastor, who is given to them by God (according to Ephes. 4:11),

will remain protected and honored in his rights; the preacher in turn will watch that the church remains in its rights, he will ward off the encroachments of individuals and always lead the way in serving love, according to Philippians 2:4: “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”

III. [^]

[The activity of the congregation for higher and lower schools.](#) (51) — [The last works and end of Pastor H. Loeber](#) (55) and [Hermann \[O. H.\] Walther.](#) (59) — [Pastor Ferd. Walther's beginning ministry in St. Louis.](#) (61) [[Dr. Vehse's challenge against Walther.](#) (61) — [Overview of Walther's life and work.](#) (64), [Walther writes to Stephan,](#) (68) — [defends against rationalist consistory.](#) (69) — [desire for freedom of America, not dependency on Stephan.](#) (71) — [The Lutheranism that Walther represents.](#) (73) — [Walther's polemics.](#) (81)]

(↑) As soon as the time of the first sifting was over for the congregations in St. Louis and Perry County, it became apparent what rich gains the newly gained knowledge and experience brought to these Christians. Although they still lived miserably for a time in the flesh and poverty often peered into the windows of the cabins, they did not indulge in spiritual sloth, but used the time of peace to build church and school all the more eagerly. Many hearts were now founded on God's Word and had become all the more certain of their grace, so their hands were also extended for service in the Kingdom of God. The pastors lived in and with their congregations and the congregation members were acutely aware that as spiritual priests it was up to them to build the house of God. Whoever wants to participate in the walls of Zion must not be casual in the work of the Lord! Those poor settlers set a beautiful example of this. Already in the summer of 1839 a parsonage was built in Altenburg, in the upper room of which the service was held. Soon after, a faithful teacher was won for the congregation's school in the person of F. Winter, a Lutheran who had emigrated from Prussia.

The desire to take their children away from the unbelieving school teachers, who were becoming more and more prevalent at that time, had drawn many of these settlers to America; they wanted to snatch not only themselves but also the souls of their children and descendants away from godless philosophy and, at least in America, put a dam against the unbelieving spirit of the times. For this purpose it was also necessary to establish a higher educational institution, which, as a school of prophets sanctified by the pure Word of God, was also to guarantee the preservation and propagation of the pure doctrine for the future as far as possible. Although the large number of ministers and candidates for the office of preacher who had immigrated to Perry County had a supply of teachers for quite some time, the three candidates who were staying in Perry County at that time, Th. Brohm, O. Fürbringer and Joh. Buenger, recognized it for their duty to lay the foundation for a theological school in connection with the pastors who lived close to them. With great joy the pastors Loeber, Keyl and Ferd. Walther went into this plan. Since the whole settlement was only in the making and larger premises were lacking, the first need was to build a cabin for the planned school. Even before the floor had been laid in the ordinary private apartments, while many were still struggling to meet their daily needs, it was nevertheless agreed to build a log cabin in which a number of pupils could also find shelter. The main work, Dr. Walther reports, was done by the dear candidates themselves. Buenger, in particular, led the others when it came to cutting down trees, sawing blocks, splitting fence rails, removing tree stumps, finally preparing the ground and putting the material together. Buenger dug the now still existing colleague well all by himself. Since at last such materials were needed that the forest did not provide itself, the St. Louis congregation stepped in with financial support, just as considerable financial contributions from St. Louis for the upkeep of the school came in later. When the log cabin stood there

and was inaugurated, there was a joy whose intimacy can only be fully imagined by the person who once shared it. — When on September 9, 1883, the same school moved into the magnificent new building in St. Louis, which is 334 feet long and 100 feet deep and rises like a royal bride above all its neighbors, Dr. Walther, on the day of the inauguration, already in the introduction to his address commemorated this poor little log cabin, in which 44 years earlier this school in Perry County had been opened. At that time, he testified to the 20,000 people who had gathered for the dedication of this new (third) building, "At that time, our little log cabin seemed to us to be a palace into which we moved with no less joy than into this magnificent building. Our poverty was so great at that time that even such a small log cabin stood before our eyes like a miracle, for which we could only thank God with tears of joy." — With seven boys the lessons in that college were begun *) and so the foundation was laid for the subsequent Concordia College and Seminary in St. Louis, where the institution was transferred in 1850, after it had been handed over to the Missouri Synod.

The desire to do great deeds, with the help of the common treasury, to draw more and more Lutherans over from Germany and to extend from Perry County a hierarchical central government over the church, which the lawyers among the former followers of Stephan had cherished, was thoroughly dashed! [Marbach] But quietly they did their duty to plant the regained Gospel in the hearts of the children. The lambs of Christ had to be grazed, so it was a matter of course that where no teacher could be employed, the minister, together with the pastoral office, took over the teaching office and administered it to the best of his ability. In St. Louis the Candidate L. Geyer (now pastor in Texas)

*) Among these boys were the current President Biltz, Pastor Müller in Chester, Ill. and Pastor Loeber Sr. in Milwaukee, Wis.

conducted the school. And from July 1841 on, the candidate J. F. Buenger took over the St. Louis congregation's school, who, after Geyer had followed another call, was assigned to the St. Louis pastor as assistant. At that time the St. Louis congregation had neither church nor school buildings. The pastor lived in a house on Poplar Street and the school was located below. As in Altenburg, the school room was also the teacher's living room. Since Buenger was very diligent, the school in St. Louis was very popular. Many parents who did not belong to the Lutheran congregation sent their children to the school, because they recognized that they were not only well taught, but also accustomed to fine discipline. Even the German radicals had already established a so-called Free Man's school (*Freimannerschule*) in St. Louis. A student who had lost his way, of which many were wandering about in America, boasted that he was a lawyer from Leipzig, but when he took over the school of the German radicals and wanted to teach the children a scientific education, it turned out that he could not even give them the most basic knowledge. For two years he was paid \$600 a year for his service, and soon after that the school ceased altogether, and the majority of the children went to Buenger's Lutheran school. Buenger, a candidate-teacher, initially received a monthly salary of \$15, later \$25. It took a practical genius, as Buenger was, to make a room, which was calculated for hardly 50 students besides the teacher's bed and household goods, usable for more than 80 children. And only with the help of a book of ABCs, which was printed in St. Louis on 12 sheets with a short appendix, to replace the complete lack of suitable school books. It was understood that even parents who did not belong to the "Saxon congregation", as it was now called, had to purchase Luther's Small Catechism for their children, since these children had to take part in religious education just as well as the others. Already at that time, in addition to Biblical History, Catechism,

Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic, something was also taught in the English language by Buenger. It was already apparent at that time that these parochial schools could compete with the local state schools, the so-called district or free schools, in English and other public service skills. Since the local public state schools rest on a quite humanistic basis, and bring a false spirit into the school children, while the religious instruction in these ordinary schools is almost forbidden, and even did not take place at all by the state, they must reveal more and more their anti-Christian influence for the ruin of the local people (according to the words: "he who does not gather with me, scatters"). Even non-Lutheran denominations are beginning to look with horror at young America, whose arrogant, unbridled spirit is not dampened even by the makeshift Sunday school. Immense sums of money are spent on higher and lower state schools in the cities, and yet only a superficial training is achieved where religious upbringing is lacking. The teachers who now, in place of the rationalistic deism that was already on the decline in the Puritan era, often pay homage to crude Darwinism and atheism, are satisfied with the proud ornamental angels and vain puppets that emerge from these state schools. On the other hand, the Lutheran parish school in St. Louis soon proved to be a nursery of the church and a mission through which the hearts of parents were often turned to the children. There is no question that the Missouri Synod, whose principles are often shouted as too harsh and grumpy by the world, is not only spreading through its schools but is also acting as a salutary salt to counteract the general decay among the people. Of the greatest importance was therefore also the founding of the Addison Seminary for School Teachers, which will be reported on in the [fourth chapter of this book](#).

[↑] A report on the Lutheran school at Altenburg, Perry County can be found in [No. 24, Volume I of *Lutheraner*](#) from

the pen of the sainted pastor [G. H. Loeber](#). As great as the difficulties had been with the whole cultivation of the congregations and with the construction of this educational institution, God's blessing rested on the undertaking, whereby not only the children were saved from un-Christian school lessons, but also the studying youth were to be prepared for their future profession in a more Christian way than is unfortunately the case at most of the learned schools in Germany, following the example of the older Lutheran churches. Loeber's report says that after the candidates, who in conjunction with Pastor Ferd. Walther had laid the first hand on the company, mostly followed other calls into the preaching ministry, candidate Brohm mainly continued the work, and in fellowship with him (namely Loeber), with God's help, tended the mustard seed of the small college. When Th. Brohm was also called to the Lutheran ministry in New York, Loeber continued the teaching for the most part on his own, only Pastor Keyl took over some more lessons. — Although Pastor Ferd. Walther had already been working in St. Louis for four years, he still took care of the upkeep of the Altenburg institution. Since it could be seen that Pastor Loeber was exhausting his strength there, the St. Louis congregation appointed from their midst the candidate of theology [J. J. Gönner](#) as a special teacher and rector. Also the care of most of the college students was taken over by the congregations. Pastor Loeber earnestly requested in another connection that all who know and confess that the name of God can be hallowed and that people can live pious and godly lives only “where the Word of God is taught clear and pure”, all who pray that the kingdom of God may come, as it does to us, also to those who will be born after us in the true faith which must be worked by the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the Gospel, that all who together with us know and confess this “would when they pray the Lord's Prayer diligently remember also our school for the training of future teachers and

pastors, that God would in His grace further the labors of our hands, that He would grant to us teachers wisdom, strength, faithfulness and patience, and permit the young plants to grow and flourish to His praise.” — May God bless the congregations in St. Louis and New York (the congregation of Pastor Brohm) for their charity, but he also awakens in others ever more Christian zeal and holy care “for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,” Ephesians 4:12. Loeber then reminds us of Luther's Sermon of 1530: Admonition that children should be kept in school, in which he shows the high duty and obligation of Christian parents, if God has given them capable boys, to give them joyfully and gladly also for the service of God and His Church. Finally, he concludes with the words of Luther's preface to the Small Catechism, that if parents are guilty of going against this, they would prove to be the worst enemies of God and man. [**My mother was NOT guilty of this!**] Through these words, the father of the famous Prof. [Gotthilf Heinrich Schubert](#) [[pic](#)], who, as he reports, was initially destined to be a ribbon dealer, was once brought to theological study in a strange way, since the pious mother had heard the hint of God from these words of Luther.

Since present writing must refrain in the following from referring to the individual congregations in Perry County, we would like to dedicate a word here to the memory of the sainted [G. H. Loeber](#), [whose death](#) was mourned not only by his congregation but also by the entire Synod, which had been constituted two years before Pastor Loeber's death. With great sacrifice he had served the congregation in Altenburg for ten years, when in 1849 the pernicious epidemic of cholera claimed many victims in Perry County as well. The frequent visits to the sick and other work wore down his strength. On August 1, he also laid down on his sickbed, and on the 13th [**But see [p. 169](#), [August 19](#)**] of the same month, Pastor G. H. Loeber [*sic*: [G. H. Loeber](#)] blessedly passed away in his Lord. A nervous fever was his last illness. His memory is still alive in many hearts to this day in

the settlement. Richly instructive in his teaching, he had a special gift for promoting the inner peace of the Church. For days on end he was able to devote his energies to reconciling quarrelling parties and his joy was great when he succeeded. He was a spiritual father in his congregation. So Dr. Vehse, who had known him already in Germany, says of him: “All those who knew Pastor Loeber in Germany will agree with me that he was one of the most excellent personalities. In Altenburg, his homeland, he was revered throughout; any blasphemy had to be silenced when one saw his official and family life. All hearts, not only those of our congregation, were drawn towards him in America. The expression of his face and his figure, similar to that of Apostle John in Duerer's paintings, the dignity of his posture, the unpretentiousness of his whole being, had to take over. I remember his sermons with the most grateful inner emotions; I will never forget the one on the words: ‘Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?’ on the second Easter day in St. Louis. [end of Vehse quote?] — Even today we are told how he answered those who visited him in the hospital and asked about his condition: “I have forgiveness for my sins” His last word in parting was: “Lord Jesus, you have my soul.” Born in the year 1797 in Kahla, Saxony-Altenburg, where his father, whom he lost early, was superintendent, he kept a spark of faith in the educational institutions, as well as at the University of Jena, despite the prevailing unbelief, which was kindled in him early on. In 1824 he confessed his Lord Christ before the consistory and followed the call to the preaching office in Eichenberg and Pibra. Involved in the struggle with the rationalist church superiors of his fatherland, he joined Stephan when he undertook the emigration. Since Pastor H. Loeber belonged to a highly respected family, and was himself held in high esteem, people in wide circles were surprised by this step. His relatives, including a brother who

owned a manor, were horrified when they heard of the privations that Pastor Loeber had to endure in the early days in Altenburg, Missouri. Like all children of God, he too had to enter the Kingdom of God through much tribulation. At the age of 52 years 7 months and 14 days he had completed his run. Not in the hereditary grave of his fathers, but in the American Altenburg on the Mississippi, his body was buried to earth on August 21 by his mourners. He rests in the middle of the local cemetery under a shady oak tree. The gravestone placed on his headstone bears the inscription: “Here rests in God Gotthold Heinrich Loeber, faithful pastor of Altenburg,” — “They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.” Dan. 12:3 — Pastor Gruber, who survived him at that time, wrote of his friend Loeber after his death in [Der Lutheraner, Vol. VI, No. 19](#) and [20](#); but Pastor Walther, who was then already President of the Synod, recalls the following words in the [Synodical Address of 1850](#) [p. 116]: “In our Loeber our Synod has lost its crown, its Father in Christ, its living example of an experienced and righteous servant of the Church in doctrine and life, in shepherding and in battling, in friendly love and awe-inspiring seriousness, its most fervent intercessor, in short a man who made himself a wall for them and stood against the breach.”

[↑] Already eight years before, death had torn a gap in the circle of Saxon preachers. The elderly pastor Walther, who still on Christmas 1840 had given three precious sermons on the topic: “Heaven on Earth”, lay down in bed sick and on January 21, 1841, he fell asleep in his Lord Jesus. [O. Herm. Walther](#) already had the testimony in Germany that he was a faithful and eager servant of the Lord. He was seen there so unwilling to part with his family that his prince offered him the money to go and for his return, before he left for America, if only he would return soon. He

could also bear the wicked with patience and lead the church with wisdom. After Stephan's unmasking, O. H. Walther was most responsible for spreading the news of the thorough renunciation of Stephanism and the penitential confession of his previous followers in Germany as well. *) Stephan had captured the noble mind of Hermann Walther by the fact that he, who was fond of being remembered, gladly accepted the pastoral counseling that Stephan practiced on him in his humility, and while he thought that the adulation he heard in other circles could only bring harm to his soul, he was, on the other hand, inwardly encouraged by Stephan. This was what he had until then opposed the scrupulous doubts of his younger brother, when the latter feared that Stephan would use the faithful devotion of the unsuspecting Hermann Walther as a shield to counter the suspicions of the sharper-eyed. After Stephan's unmasking, O. H. Walther was seized by such a deep remorse that he had trusted that man so much and for such a long time, that this sadness undoubtedly fed on his physical life. He lived to be no more than 31 years and 4 months old and was not only mourned by a widow and a son, but also buried with genuine tears by his congregation in St. Louis. Among many harsh challenges, which he overcame with God's Word and fervent prayer, he was, next to God, the first planter of this church, which over the years under Pastor Ferd. Walther's leadership has branched out into four districts and now into many more churches all over St. Louis.

*) The sincere confession that the Saxon pastors made also before their fellow believers in Germany was not without a friendly response. Particularly comforting was a word that Prof. [Franz Delitzsch](#) in the [Pilgrim from Saxony](#) called upon those dear men, "Let them again take up harps that had hung on the willows for so long and confidently sing their hymns of praise." Dr. Rudelbach was also pleased about an essay sent to him by Pastor [G. H. Loeber](#), which appeared in [R. and G.'s Zeitschrift für lutherische Theologie](#) at that time.

[↑] On Jubilate Sunday 1841 Pastor Ferd. Walther took up his office as successor of his brother in St. Louis after receiving his regular call. He administered the same for the first time as a pastor, but in 1850 he was elected professor of Concordia Seminary, which had been moved from Altenburg to St. Louis. He was dismissed by the congregation on the condition that he would continue to serve the congregation as a pastor by preaching and participating in the congregation's government together with pastors of the individual districts.

A very extensive activity had begun with this for this dear man, of whom, for example, R. Hoffmann writes: "He is the creator and to this day the spiritual leader of the Synod; he who knows him knows the synod; he knew how to instill in it his thoughts, his direction, his goals." But these were not his own, but God's.

[↑] Initially, his office in St. Louis was made very difficult for him by the fact that he was followed by persons, some of whom were found by him, who had gone from hierarchical Stephanism to the opposite extreme, namely [Donatism](#) and Democratism, who declared that Pastor Walther's adherence to the divine rights and powers of the holy ministry was a continuation of the Stephanist system and who tried to persuade the congregation to remove him as a second Stephan. The consequence was that a number of the members of the congregation became very disturbed in their conscience and finally compelled Pastor Walther to read a document drawn up by Dr. Vehse publicly, in which the emigrated pastors were accused of continuing the old Stephanist hierarchical priesthood [*Priesterherrschaft*]. Walther read the document out, under the condition that after the end of the reading he would be allowed to read a rejoinder in which he would prove from Scripture, the Confessions, Luther, and other pure theologians that he insisted only on those rights of the preaching ministry which God's Word gave it, and that nothing would move him to recognize, in the place of the spiritual priesthood,

an ungodly lay rule. [*i.e.* [Donatism/Democratism](#)] He testified to them that they would be ashamed of themselves if they had a minister who, in order to keep their favor, would surrender to them the rights that God grants to the holy office of the ministry [*Predigtamt*]; precisely then they would have to despise and reject him as a miserable servant of men. Against the misinterpretations of Vehse's writings, Walther countered with a hundred testimonies of orthodox theologians, and, in response to the accusation of a renewed Stephanism, proclaimed: "I have freed you from the fetters of the hierarchy, and therefore I am the less inclined to expect of you, that you will again put your pastors in fetters!"

The result was that the congregation was vividly convinced of the correctness of the position which its pastor had previously asserted in his office. The congregation was completely reassured and, by God's grace, saved from the danger of falling into Anabaptist contempt for the preaching ministry after hierarchical fetters were cast off. The disturbers of the peace [*Ruhestörer*] realized that it was impossible for them to separate congregation and pastor from each other and had to be content with arguing with Pastor Walther every Sunday evening. [↑] This ended with one part of the church being won over and the other moving away. Several of the latter returned later and joined the congregation, but the leader, called Sproede, continued his agitation in the wildest fanaticism. One day, however, when he returned to his house from a visit with a member of the congregation, whom he had tried to incite against Pastor Walther with all the means of his fanatical eloquence, he said to his wife: "I don't know how I feel," sat down at a table, put his head on his arm and was lifeless the next moment. — This Sproede had also published an essay in the [Anzeiger des Westens](#), among other things, in which he accused the congregation of being not truly Lutheran, but a sect tyrannized by a domineering priest. The congregation responded to

these attacks in the same paper with the following, among others:

"Whoever wants to convince himself whether we are now really striving sincerely to fulfil the high goals that the Evangelical Lutheran Church has set for us, come and see and hear (for we ourselves are not entitled to any witness about this), our church, our school, our congregational meetings and our houses are open to everyone. We do not sneak around in corners, but act openly before the whole world. Whoever wants to see for himself whether there is still priesthood in our country, read the statutes of our community rules, and it will be easy for him to see whether we are a free, independent Christian congregation or not!" — —
"Some of those who were protesting against our cause advised us that everything should stop, that the preachers should abandon their profession, that the congregation should dissolve their association, and then sit down at the feet of their reformers, or rather destroyers. But we have had too bitter an experience of the perishable nature of such a Stephanist religious zeal to have been deceived by the new garment in which it wanted to wrap itself." — "How little those who do not grant us the name of an Evangelical Lutheran congregation themselves know and have grasped the doctrines of this church, of this the quoted protestation furnishes the clearest proof, since it insists that an oath which has been sworn to a deceiver in ignorance must be kept, and the cry is raised in it, the significance of which has long ago been revealed by Holy Scripture (Mark 13:21. Behold, here is Christ, behold there He is!)." —

The congregation of St. Louis learned from these battles that the challenge teaches us to remember the Word. Trusting in God's care, they also put their hands to work and began building a church. On the 2nd Sunday of Advent 1842, this church could be handed over to the service of the Triune God. It was the first church of the Trinity built for about \$4500 cost, on a lot that cost \$1000. In the document laid down in the foundation stone, the congregation thus addresses

the descendants: Know this, O reader! whoever you may be, that we recognize no other God for the true God but the Triune God, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, as He revealed Himself to us in His Word. Know this, O reader! For this alone we have laid the foundation of our Church, that in it the pure Word of God is proclaimed to us and our descendants according to the interpretation of the Apostolic Church, and according to it to the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and that the sacred sacraments, according to the institution of Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, are administered by the called ministers of the Church.”

In 1865, the second Trinity Church of the Southern District of the same parish could be built at a cost of \$115,000, at a time when the entire parish in St. Louis was already maintaining 12 parish schools.

(↑) Since the esteemed publisher of this book has expressed the explicit wish to give an overview of Dr. Walther's life and work at the appropriate place, the following is an attempt, which can only be a poor one, however, because the writer of these lines lives 800 English miles away from St. Louis.

Although there is no national bishop in the American Lutheran Church, and no so-called higher church government has been established, the Lord, exalted to the right hand of God, nevertheless also in the free church, places shepherds and teachers, indeed, he also gives such gifts that serve the edification of the body of Christ in ever richer measure and in ever wider circles. A still living matron, who immigrated here in 1839 with Pastor Grabau's congregation, relates that the Prussian Separates, who at that time, while their preachers were in prison, often crossed the Saxon border from Thuringia and had their children baptized in Sachsen-Altenburg by Pastor H. Loeber and other Lutheran pastors,

had already become aware of the young Pastor Ferdinand Walther. Pastor H. Loeber, who pointed out those friends and fellow believers from Walther, had well recognized that God the Lord had prepared him to be an important tool in his church under the many temptations through which Walther had already been led at that time.

Karl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther was born on October 25, 1811 in Langenchursdorf in the Saxon valley of [the river Mulde](#). Born into a pious pastor's family, he enrolled in the University of Leipzig as a theological student in 1829. As in the whole of Saxony, it was very sad at that time also at this "high school". In Saxony, too, the university was the source of the poisonous current that poured over the land in manifold enlightenment and correspondence; most students took what the unbelieving, rationalist professors presented as the great wisdom of the day at face value and presented the same fodder to their congregations afterwards, as soon as they were employed as preachers. That which the then Chief Court Preacher von Ammon, for example, called a "further education of Christianity to a world religion", as the title of one of his books reads, was in reality a "perversion of Christianity into a worldly religion", as Hermann Walther said of it. After the older brother had already been awakened to faith before, Ferdinand joined the circle of students through the mediation of Herman, who had come to believe in the grace of God in Christ, the Saviour of sinners, through the testimony of believing so-called laymen and an old candidate named Kühn, who was a serious Christian and was giving private instruction in Leipzig. On certain days of each week, this group of people gathered for common prayer, for reading the Scriptures together, for edification and for mutual exchange about the one thing that is needful. In addition to Ferd. Walther the following, who later also immigrated with Stephan and since have entered their eternal home, included Theod. Brohm, and Joh. Friedr. Buenger, with whom Ferd. Walther was always intimately acquainted,

along with the still living O. Fürbringer, who left Leipzig two years earlier. Although in part hated, in part pitied by the world, from which they withdrew completely, they were nevertheless joyful in their God and Savior, and the faith which had been kindled in these young men by means of the precious Bible was naturally none other than the Lutheran faith. In the beginning there was no talk about the doctrinal differences between the different churches, but as they grew in knowledge, after some time the question arose: What faith are you? Are you Lutheran? or Reformed? or United? Admittedly, the consequence of this was a sifting; but most of them soon recognized that no other than the Lutheran faith had long since been sealed in them by the Holy Spirit as the true one, the only one which stands firm in every trouble and trial, even before they had come to know which church it was that held this faith. [NB: [The report on “this group of people” was quoted by F. Pieper, L. u. W. vol. 71 \(1925\), p. 16](#)] Therefore, only a few left the group. But while Candidate Kühn himself, after long and heavy fears and struggles under the most terrible horrors of the Law, had only come to the certainty of the forgiveness of his sins and his state of grace, he wanted to lead the awakened group just as he had been led, and tried to convince his friends that their whole Christianity could not rest on a firm foundation until they too had experienced a high degree of repentance and true horrors of hell. The result was a fairly general change from a cheerful evangelical Christianity to a more legal and somber one. Most of them now got into a self-actualization by which they wanted to produce the demanded action in themselves Especially this was the case with the students Joh. Buenger and Ferd. Walther, indeed, the latter got into such distress that he was on the verge of despair after years of futile struggles. In the short biography of the once venerable Pastor Joh. Fr. Buenger, from which the above is taken, he reports: “Whoever is led to Christ without any detours, usually has no idea what great grace God has bestowed on him,

to prove that he was not driven by his own efforts. These young men tormented themselves day and night, and although they read the Bible and religious edification books, they still thought that the promises of grace of the Scriptures were not yet their business, because they had not yet fulfilled the necessary conditions; but the less a book enticed them to believe, and the more legally it urged them to kill the old man completely before the lifting of the covenant, the better the book was for them. Even such writings, Dr. Walther reports, we usually read only as far as the pain and the exercises of repentance were described, and then the comfort for the repentant came, and we usually closed the book, for we thought that this was not yet for us. — In addition, Ferd. Walther's body became so sick and miserable that people feared that consumption would soon become a goal in his life. He was so anxious for his soul's salvation that he was afraid to eat his fill of food for his body, and refused the invitations of Christian friends so that he would not give the flesh room! — He had to learn that he could not free himself from the bonds of the Law. There was not such a great synergism among the Christians of that time that they would have sought the reason for salvation in themselves or in a particular strength of faith, but the devotional books from Halle (of Francke and others) in particular left no room for the flesh.), in particular, left the impression that man could not and should not believe, and therefore could not be sure of his state of grace as a child of God until he had gone through a certain continuous penitential struggle and experienced something of what the Lord Christ endured in Gethsemane. Since faith always seizes grace without merit of its own, it cannot depend on the fulfilment of any human condition. Therefore, whoever wants to prepare himself for faith through his own work must either fall into self-righteousness or despair. That is why Dr. Walther recently, at the General Pastoral-

Conference in Chicago in October 1881, appealed to his present opponents that a Christian overcomes all temptations and becomes certain of his salvation only when he knows that it is not in his hands, from which, as the Formula of Concord teaches, it is easily lost, but that his salvation is based, apart from him, in the merciful election of God. Walther also warns against such a degeneration of the Gospel, which makes it mostly an order and an instruction; indeed, he has repeatedly stated that it is certain that many more people are lost today because the Gospel is not preached to them without restraint than because they hear the Law too seldom.

(↑) Now the reader asks, how was Ferd. Walther rescued from this labyrinth of doubt? So he himself answers in a note on [p. 29 of Buenger's biography](#) with the following: “The writer of these lines has had the same experience as Buenger. Only when no one knew how to advise him in his severe spiritual temptations, when, on the contrary, the believing pastors, who had been reputed to be men of great Christian experience, to whom he turned in his search for help, all directed him to Stephan, only then did he turn to Stephan in writing, asking him for advice from God’s Word. He did this without any particular trust in Stephan's person and without any particular hope of finding what he was looking for in him. Because of the state of his soul, his sermon did not seem sharp enough to him at the time, not urgent enough for deep repentance and penance. When the writer finally received the answer, he therefore did not open the letter until he had fervently called upon God to preserve him so that he would not take false comfort, if such were to be contained in the received answer. But when he read it, it was no different than if he had suddenly been transferred from hell to heaven. The tears of fear and distress that he had wept for so long were now transformed into tears of true heavenly joy. He could not resist: he had to go to Jesus. Stephan showed him that

the repentance from the Law which he sought had long since been experienced; that he lacks nothing but faith; nothing but that he now surrenders himself to the heavenly Good Samaritan as the one who fell among the murderers. He had been mistaken in thinking that he had to carry the beast of burden of the Good Samaritan himself in order to reach the inn of grace, whereas the will of the Good Samaritan was to lift him onto his beast of burden and have him carried into the inn. Thus the peace of God returned to him. There he had a living experience of what private absolution is for a sinner who is frightened from the heart. Although Stephan had not given him formal absolution in his letter, he had applied the Gospel to him personally, which is the very essence of private absolution." — Dr. Walther has remained to this day fully grateful for the letter that Stephan addressed to him, but, as already noted, he was saved from the deification with which others attached to Stephan. When about half a year later the time approached in which Walther was to leave the university, the blessed Consistorial Councillor and Superintendent Dr. Rudelbach called him to propose him as tutor of his godly count. At this point Rudelbach demanded that Walther should break off all fellowship with Stephan. After Walther had told him what had led him to Stephan and how much he had to thank him, Rudelbach replied: "You should not leave Stephan, but in God's name remain in fellowship with him; but beware, beware of all human idolatry!" This warning, Walther wrote, he had accepted with deep gratitude and followed it, as much as God's grace had opened his eyes.

(↑) Although the above-mentioned candidates did not lack good credentials upon completion of their academic careers, they had no prospect of being promoted to the office by the rationalist consistory; they were therefore dependent on patronage positions, as were candidates of faith in general,

which were given by pious counts and nobles. Ferd. Walther was also called to such a place as pastor in Bräunsdorf near Penig. There he found support in his pious church patron, the cabinet minister Count Detlef von Einsiedel, but also an enemy in the godless school teacher of his parish village. It is already reported in the first chapter of this writing that this teacher wanted to prevent the introduction of a Christian school textbook, and that he also swung the ignorant local school board to his side. Although these rationalists did not succeed in introducing the anti-Christian book *School Friend*, as it was called, Pastor F. Walther was also involved in costly lawsuits through the machinations of his opponents, as this also happened to Pastor M. [Bürger](#) and others. He also writes that there was no end to the complaints and lawsuits with which one was prosecuted before the infidel superintendents. Already when Pastor Walther was ordained, the acting Superintendent blasphemed Elijah and David in his addresses to him, and said that Walther should preach such a cheerful Christianity as Christ preached at the marriage at Cana! Since he had heard Walther's trial sermon, the Superintendent warned him against a Christianity that despised the joys of this life, that he (Walther) should not forget that he was not in the desert but in a flourishing church, etc. Since the Superintendent misused the text of the Gospel John 1:19 here to call out to the young pastor: "Who are you? Are you a prophet, or do you even want to be Christ?" At the meal he told the Superintendent that he was playing the role of the priests and Levites sent by the Jews, who were addressing John the Baptist with this question. Even more often it happened afterwards that the Superintendent had to put down his eyes in shame when he was healed by Pastor Walther through the Holy Scripture. Walther reminded his superior that the Superintendent had obliged the pastors to use the Lutheran symbols, and in response to the Superintendent's objection that the commitment

was only based on the spirit of symbols, Walther responded, that nothing of the kind had been said when he was pledged to the confessions, but that Lutheran ministers were specifically required to be faithful to the confessions in both the language and the content (*in rebus et phrasibus*) of their teaching. Meanwhile also the church textbooks, hymnbooks and agendas were no longer in conformance with the Confessions of the Lutheran Church. The Saxon state church was indeed much more permeated by unbelief and the union between believers and unbelievers was almost more oppressive than in Prussia, where the union between the Reformed and Lutherans had been introduced. It was known that also in Prussia, where emigration was permitted again since 1837, many Lutherans were preparing to emigrate to America, partly also to Australia *), and although one wanted to assert against the Saxon emigration that at that time the oath of confession was not yet weakened in Saxony so that apparently the Lutheran Church still rightly existed, it was clear to Walther and other preachers that they were forced in their regional church to pull on a yoke with unbelievers and to conduct their ministry together with the wolves, who tear the flock apart, contrary to the clear command of Christ Matt. 7:15. Walther therefore writes further: "It had to be a burden of conscience for Lutheran-believing pastors of the Saxon Regional Church that they, contrary to God's clear word, would be able to carry out their office not only for church, sacramental and fraternal fellowship with false doctrines, yes, they were forced with the most obvious heretics, but they even had to acknowledge them for their chief shepherds, to inaugurate themselves into office by them, yes, they even had to allow them to blaspheme the divine truth before their own congregations, the congregations of the preachers, and to spue out their doctri doctrines of the devil before them." (↑) Under this heavy burden of conscience

*) Compare: Ey: [*Reports on the Emigration of the Prussian Lutherans to South Australia*](#). Dresden, Heinrich J. Naumann. [[*Mitteilungen über die Auswanderung der preußischen Lutheraner nach Süd-Australien*](#)]

the desire for the freedom to be allowed to serve God the Lord according to His Word became ever greater. And this justified desire, not a rapturous attachment to Stephan, led Ferdinand Walther to decide to set off for America with the other brethren in the faith in October 1838. The following serves as proof of this: After Pastor Walther had submitted his resignation to the Saxon Consistory to emigrate to America, he was personally asked by the then Church Council Meissner: "If Stephan before he emigrates will be picked up by the police, which is likely now, how will you emigrate in that case as well?" Walther immediately replied: "It goes without saying that I will emigrate, Stephan may or may not travel with me." Church Councillor Meissner finally said: "Since I recognize that emigration is a matter of deepest conviction for you, I will ensure that you will at least receive an honorable discharge from your previous office". The latter was also granted. — During the journey, Walther was asked by fellow passengers whether, if all the ships of the emigrants sank, the church would also sink? Pastor Walther replied: "No, we are not the Church, but part of it," but he also predicted that if one had reached America under God's protection, one should not expect good days there either, but rather prepare for the worst. —

The fact that he refused to swear that blasphemous oath of allegiance to Bishop Stephan is already noted above. So the St. Louis free spirits and other opponents quite wrongly reproached him with this reproach, which was renewed again when Walther in 1844 began to write the church newspaper *Der Lutheraner* (*The Lutheran*), which three years later was raised to the public organ of the Missouri Synod and is now [[in 1884](#)] in its 40th year. When at that time F. Walther's public effectiveness was still in its beginning, a liberalistic newspaper hurled the reproach at these Saxons that these Old-Lutherans were a party driven out of Germany,

no better than the Jesuits. Meanwhile, while no one today thinks of driving the Missouri Synod, which has grown to 900 preachers and many more congregations, out of our country. But there is no shortage of opponents today and even well-meaning friends in Germany, in spite of the fact that they (as one reads in the writing of [R. Hoffmann](#)) are unable to deny the Missouri Synod their admiration, nevertheless find much to criticize. (↑) So concerning the Lutheranism that Dr. Walther represents and the aim he has in mind, the following is to be noted here, mostly from the essays of Dr. Walther which were published already in 1845 in the first volume of *Der Lutheraner*:

1) Even today, especially among the "Evangelicals", as they call themselves, the obsession prevails that a strict orthodoxy is not compatible with the spiritual life, a strict Lutheran is also dead Orthodoxy, i.e. a mere believer in authority, who took his Lutheran symbols as the existing church law, completely refrained from a living penetration of the Lutheran faith — for only fraudulently are the symbols signed by the Lutheran clergymen, so that the Lutheran Confession would be recognized by the state — that the orthodox Lutherans are only interested in the legal recognition of this constitution, not in the state of the congregations, the visible fellowship of those who have accepted a Lutheran church order as their constitution, that they consider this particular churchly faction to be the true visible and invisible church of Jesus Christ, consisting of them only, which is to save us, and in which we must believe! — that it is wholly inconsistent to assume that there are children of God outside this church, which the Old Lutherans proclaim to be the one and only saving church of Jesus Christ, for the Old Lutherans are such people who place the Church above Christianity, yes, who make the Church their God, or rather their idol! But where such a Donatist error appeared, as if the Lutheran Church was a visible institution, limited to the so-called Lutherans, as if the

communion of saints was enclosed within the boundaries of a human name, a country or a time, Dr. Walther claimed from the beginning of his work: "Everyone who submits to the whole written Word of God without false pretence and who carries the true faith in our Lord Jesus Christ in his heart and confesses it before the world, we extend our hands to him, we respect him as our fellow believers, for a member of our church, for a Lutheran, under whichever sect he may be hidden and imprisoned.

([Lutheraner No. 2, p. 1.](#)) We do not consider the separated church party, which has been appearing in history for 300 years, to be the church, or the whole church, to which we alone profess our faith, and without which no salvation can be found! Precisely because when we call ourselves Lutherans (a name that was originally used to insult us) we profess not a new but a united old Christian Church, which always has the same doctrine, namely the truth to which all the children of God of all times and zones belong, it is not an inconsistency but only logical that even those true Christians who are outwardly connected with a sect belong to our Church, that those with us and we with them find members in the spiritual body of the true Church; while only those who are born again belong to the body of Christ (if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his, Rom. 8:9), then those who are in spiritual death cannot belong to the true Church. Nor was it ever taught in the Missouri Synod that one must believe in the Church. But when it is claimed that one must not leave the Church, this is an invitation not to leave, nor to deny, Christ himself, the truth, the doctrine of the universal Christian Church. Since the Church is not an external institution, it is not saving as such. Only where one wants to bind, in a Donatist way, Christianity and the truth which is in Christ to a visible party or synod or association (now called Evangelical or separated Lutheran),

one can fall into such sectarian arrogance as Dr. Walther has consistently fought against during his many years of service. Of course, he claims that one can be saved only in the true Church, that is, that we can be saved only through the true faith in Christ, the same faith that one has only in the true Church. That is why Dr. Walther often refers to the precaution of our fathers contained in the Preface to the Formula of Concord, as if their condemnations were to apply to those who err out of simplicity and do not blaspheme the truth of the divine Word, much less to whole churches, but only to false and seductive doctrines and the same stubborn teachers and blasphemers. That is why Dr. Walther also rejected this Romanist narrow-mindedness of Pastor Grabau and his followers, which would indeed make the Lutheran Church a sect, since it is precisely that church which also as a visible particular church has never separated itself from the universal Christian church.

2) Although it is not possible to limit the totality of the truly faithful to any particular Church, not even to the visible and symbolic Church called Lutheran, as if it were necessary to become Lutheran in order to enter the fellowship of saints, nevertheless the Lutheran Church retains the privilege of being the Church of the pure Word and the true sacrament. The name "Lutheran" is thus a distinguishing name by which we distinguish ourselves from all false believers and want to confess to the orthodox universal church, whose doctrine it is, that was preached by Luther and laid down and confessed in the Lutheran symbols. Dr. Walther and those who agree with him are therefore not among those who seek humility in saying, "I think I have the truth, but others who believe differently than I do have it! The Formula of Concord also clearly indicates to the most indifferent, in the above-mentioned precaution, whom and what must be rejected; whoever is stubborn in false doctrine and blasphemes the truth does not belong to the

universal Christian church, whether he appeals to sweet or sour feelings! That is why Luther reproached Zwingli, among others, for arguing against an article that was unanimously confessed by all Christians in the doctrine of Holy Communion. Without taking all the Lutheran symbols or certain ceremonies as the trade-mark of our church, we nevertheless claim that no other doctrine of Christ, and that no other doctrine saves people, than the doctrine and the faith which is carried in the heart and known with the mouth by the true Lutherans. With this we want to say nothing else but: We stand by the universal Christian church, whose doctrine the visible Evangelical Lutheran church holds. "If the Evangelicals and Methodists, like the high priests in Jerusalem, may tear their clothes in such statements because of the blasphemy they think they find in this, that does not matter the least. In doing so they only reveal that they cannot, of course, in good conscience say that they have the only right doctrine and the only right faith. If you masters prove that the doctrine which the true Lutherans have confessed in their public confessions is contrary to the Word of God and is not the voice of Christ and his Church, you have won! While the truth is always only one, those who do so wrongly console themselves with delusion, as if there were many true churches that contradict each other.

3) Since the opponents up to this day consider the Missourian Lutherans as equal to such a synodical party which works only for the propagation of their church order and name, as if the previous and more distant propagation of the synod as a visible constitution were our purpose and goal, the following sentence is important from the same article of *Der Lutheraner*, in which Dr. Walther continues: "We do not argue for a peculiarly constituted party that calls itself Lutheran! Our aim is not that all Christians should adopt a so-called Lutheran church order and Lutheran ceremonies, gather together for a Lutheran synod, call themselves Lutheran, and

commit ourselves to the Lutheran symbols, whether from the heart or just deceptively, no, we are not fighting for an external building with a Lutheran figurehead. The object of our struggle is nothing other than the true faith, the pure truth, the unadulterated Gospel, the pure foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, since Jesus Christ is the cornerstone, that is, the jewel that has been familiar to the true Church of all times, that she has preserved for us through the centuries, often with the shedding of rivers of blood, and that is now also familiar to us. Where a Lutheran constitution is legally recognized, where the name "Lutheran" is supposed to stamp everything, but where the pure, sole-saving doctrine is not preached and not accepted, there we recognize just as little an Evangelical-Lutheran, i.e. a true church, where everything is based on "Evangelical, Reformed, Methodist", etc. We consider false teachers who bear the Lutheran name as little for our fellow believers as we do for the worst blasphemer of the Lutheran name, while we feel intimately connected with all the children of God in a spirit of brotherly faith, no matter in what setting they may be imprisoned." —

It has been repeatedly stated that the Missouri side would gladly drop or dissolve the entire organization of the present Missouri Synod if a more salutary agreement could be reached on the basis of Holy Scripture and under the banner of Lutheran symbols (than those containing the true understanding of Holy Scripture). When, at the Delegate Synod held in St. Louis in 1878, it was a question of establishing synods of states, into which the whole Synodical Conference, which was then widespread, was to be divided, Dr. Walther, as president of the Missouri Synod, publicly exclaimed: "The devil invented the name Missourian!" No doubt Dr. Walther did not only want to show that he willingly offered his hand to exchange the present (Missouri) synodical order with another, more comfortable one, but also to defend himself against the appearance as if we wanted

to separate us with this name from other orthodox believers and found a faction, like the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 1:12, founded factions. Now if anyone would like to ask why you do not refuse to bear the name Lutheran, Dr. Walther answers that we also with this name do not want to separate ourselves from other orthodox believers, we also do not want to base our faith on Luther (as shown above), we finally do not want to profess a new doctrine, as if we as Lutherans constituted a new church, that is, a sect. Rather, when we call ourselves Lutherans, we are not expressing anything other than that we are Christians who consider the doctrine to be the right one, which has been brought to light again in this last time from the Word of God through the ministry of Luther. We call anyone who confesses this doctrine with his mouth a Lutheran; but we consider a true Lutheran only if he believes it with his heart through the action of the Holy Spirit and has the mystery of faith in a clean conscience.

4) Dr. Walther writes already in the [first issue of the first volume of *Der Lutheraner*](#) that he has set himself the goal in publishing this paper (*Der Lutheraner*) to prove that Luther is not the head of a sect, that therefore also the Lutherans who believe, teach and confess with Luther and the Lutheran symbols do not adhere to any new doctrine, namely one that only Luther would have brought up 300 years ago, because Luther only broke away from the fellowship of those who apostatized from the old faith, misused the name of Catholic to bind the consciences to their human statutes. Luther did not preach new doctrines, but the ancient doctrines of the eternal gospel. — With it also already the reproach is answered, which R. Hoffmann among others together with many of the United church raises, as if the Missourian theologians could not and did not want more than to move back the doctrine of two centuries, as if there were probably many treasures in the dogmatic writings of the old teachers, but it was wrong to make such a "repristinatio" (rewarming) of the old-

Lutheran dogma, as if these teachers did not also have their weaknesses (as R. Hoffmann writes). But it has been shown once again in recent years that we are not only going back two centuries, but even more so 3-1/2 centuries, to the time of the Reformation. We prefer to go back to our symbols and to Luther's writings, because it is He who drew the pure Gospel from the rubble of the papal statutes of man by going back to the Holy Scripture. For this Dr. Walther gives many testimonies of Luther, who among other things advised the Lutherans, who in 1528 were to answer for their faith before Duke George, to say that they wanted to remain with the holy Gospel. "Thus Luther himself has no desire to be Lutheran except insofar as he teaches the Holy Scripture." — The one who, in the above, pursues the gracious conduct of Dr. Walther's life a little and considers the seriousness with which he, even as a student, struggled, not only in general, but especially for himself, to become certain of God's forgiveness and grace and thereby also of his own salvation, will no longer hold the erroneous opinion that Dr. Walther would allow himself to be satisfied with an authoritarian faith, or that we associate our faith with the Roman concept of a mere belief in history, which is [expressly rejected in the Apology as a mere sham belief](#). True faith is born only under the horrors of a conscience shaken by the Law, as the Apology states. But while a frightened heart and conscience must ask: "Can I and may I believe that God forgives me my sins, and on what should my faith in this grace of God be based, since I feel, taste and see nothing but sin in me and in myself", then we are far from rejecting the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit or showing less respect for it, but we teach, and experience it in our hearts, that the Spirit bears witness to our spirit that we are God's children. We also teach that the Lord Christ must destroy the work of Satan in us and dwell in us by faith. But we

base this faith on the outward testimony of the Holy Spirit, who works, strengthens and sustains faith in the heart through the Word and the holy sacraments. Only there where man is pointed away from everything that is his own, only to the Word, can the poor sinner be assured of his justification before God through the acceptance of the Word by the grace of God in Christ, but there where, as happens with Methodists, Evangelicals, and many newer groups, souls are rather warned and taught about it, they are not allowed to believe the outward testimony (of absolution and means of grace in general), not only are the means of grace decreed by God held in low esteem, but also the pure doctrine of justification, which after all is the true sun, cannot get off the ground, so rather pure human effort will soon try its hand in that human fountain, but yet gives the soul no rest. If even the English John Bunyan (who did not call himself a Lutheran) confesses that he did not heal his wounds of conscience before he read Luther's commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, through which only the way to salvation was opened for him, we should not blame the founders of the Missouri Synod for having read Luther, without doubt, at an early age, the best of all teachers, because whoever reads Luther is reminded by his own feelings and emotions of the assurance of grace given in the Word of God! No other teacher distinguishes so sharply the feeling that is found in nature from the grace that faith alone seizes from the Gospels; no other teacher shows so clearly the way by which the sinner is comforted by the Lord Christ alone, and through the grace that befalls him is to become certain and happy. — If Luther had led his own word in the least, he would not have been the Reformer through whom God provided the help that one was allowed to teach with confidence (Ps. 12:6). Therefore, as Dr. Walther teaches in a Reformation sermon, the Lutheran Church is both: the true Bible Church and the Church of grace, Christianity itself the religion of grace; Whoever does not

recognize it for that, will miss the true goal. Just as Luther from the beginning not only for himself, but for all those who were reached by his testimony, always had this goal in mind and, for example, on Acts 19:16 writes: "If you are to become saved, you must be so certain of the Word of grace for yourself that if all men spoke differently, yes, all angels said no, you could still stand alone and say, I still know that this Word is right," in the same way Dr. Walther's public ministry was directed from the beginning toward the same goal — the salvation of souls. For this reason, because every Christian must live his faith, and for this reason must be sure and certain of the doctrine of the Word of God, which is the one seed of rebirth, and must be certain and safe, therefore Dr. Walther has always safeguarded the right of Christians to judge doctrine which brought spiritual freedom for the Christian man, without which no foresight against false doctrine would be possible, back to light from God's Word and Luther's Reformation writings, and impressed upon Christians the saying that is written in Walther's *American Lutheran Gospel Sermons* [*Amerikanisch-Lutherische Evangelienpostille*] under his image: Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, etc. (1 Peter 2:9) Neither he nor his co-workers were concerned with pleasing North American democracy, but the Word of Exodus 23:2 – "Thou shalt not follow a multitude" – is expressly emphasized; it was not his intention to form a "great body commanding respect" that should have worked by its authority. When in 1872 six Evangelical Lutheran synods came together to form a single body (the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference), Dr. Walther delivered the opening sermon among the representatives of these synods (who until a few years ago had fought each other in many ways) on the text 1 Timothy 4:16 and showed that above all the salvation of souls should be made the ultimate goal of the common work in the Kingdom of Christ (see: *From Our Master's Table*, p. 265, *Lutherische Brosamen*, p. 569). Under this theme he warned above all that not every one of these church bodies

should not aim to enlarge itself, and to measure God's blessing according to the number of members, influence and eminence which it could gain. All ungodly means must be kept away from work in the kingdom of God, and the poisonous worm of selfishness must never gnaw at the tree of the union of brethren! — Since to this day there is no lack of critics, especially the accusation is made that if the Missourians are really concerned with taking care of souls and leading them to Christ, one should stop arguing about the doctrine, that it would only hinder the kingdom of God. Dr. Walther answers this in the second part of his sermon with the words of the apostle: "Take heed to the doctrine!"

Although the fundamental doctrines, on which the salvation of souls is directly dependent, are emphasized, not only this or that doctrine, but the whole Word of God is revealed for the salvation of men. Therefore the great apostle to the Gentiles declared himself to be pure of all blood only because he had withheld nothing useful from them, but had declared to them the whole counsel of God. "It already follows from Matt. 4:4, that in every Word of God life, namely temporal and eternal life, lies as if enclosed in the seed, — — what are we human beings, then, that we despise God's riches in grace, and are allowed to give away even one of His saving words? But while not only every doctrine of the Word of God is a heavenly seed of rebirth to eternal life, but also every human doctrine in matters of salvation is a hellish seed of Satan's birth to eternal death, it also follows from this, that it is not only the glory of God and of His Word that demands that it be faithfully confessed, but also that the care for immortal souls obliges every faithful Lutheran preacher to add to his doctrine also the defence, and to protest against all human doctrine! —

(↑) One has ever and always blamed the Missourians, thus also from the outset the editor of *Der Lutheraner*, Dr. Walther, for carnal and unjust polemics. Most extensively

he responds to this reproach in [No. 12 of Volume 27 of *Der Lutheraner* of February 15, 1871](#), After he had remarked beforehand that he did not demand of anyone that he consider precisely the polemics which he (Dr. Walther) considers necessary to polemize, and reminded, after the excessive accusations of his “United” opponent, of that father who, while he forbade his son to swear, himself combined many curses with his rebuke. Dr. Walther invokes the prophets, the Lord Christ and the apostles themselves, who sometimes (e.g. 2 Cor. chap. 10-12) used cutting irony, even holy mockery, to unmask their opponents. Afterwards he confesses: "We well know that we are neither prophets nor apostles, but the love of God and of our neighbor demands that we raise our voices against it where gross offences in doctrine and life arise." Dr. Walther asks us to consider the terrible decline of the local Lutheran Church when the *Lutheraner* began to appear in 1844. Even those who called themselves Lutheran, and even wanted to represent Lutheranism in their public papers, had lost the awareness and knowledge of pure doctrine. Preachers and congregations were filled with the spirit of union, and the name of the Lutheran Church had come into disrepute rather than prestige because of its flirtation with sects of all kinds. That is why Dr. Walther was not allowed to speak with empty words, least of all to those opponents who are not concerned with the knowledge of the truth but with doing completely different things. If this sharp polemic had not been carried on, if the holy appearance they wrapped themselves in had not been taken away from such opponents, many a person who finally left them because he saw that those who loved the truth were leaving them, would to this day not have left them, but would mock the testimony of the teacher who did not dare to speak up boldly. — The truthfulness which calls the evils by their right name and takes the Word of God seriously is so rare in our slack time that even well-meaning judges are unable to judge

this polemic, which flows from love, which pulls one's neighbor away from the abyss where he sleeps, and which must therefore cry out loud! (Is 58:1). Since Dr. Walther also proves himself in this as a son of the outlawed Luther, who, despite his powerful appearance in Worms, later testified that he should have taken even better hold of Behemoth (the papacy), and whose polemics were so highly regarded even by Erasmus that when someone thought that Luther was stepping out too violently, he answered that God had also given a sharp physician to the world in this last time, in which great and serious epidemics had taken the upper hand, and that God had awakened this tool for this purpose; Whoever despises him for the sake of his rebukes, may he be made right with God! So we must remember here that Dr. Walther not only exclaims of himself that we would rather build in peace than to have to hold arms with the other hand in addition to the hand that does the work, Neh. 4:17, but indeed, that he once confessed that his soul often lies in dust before God for the sake of the battles he has to fight; let it befall him as it befell Joseph, who also used harsh words against his brothers for the first time, but afterwards withdrew into his chamber, cried out and now washed his tearful eyes and finally entered the circle of his brothers again. The same testimony that Melanchthon once gave at Luther's funeral, after 28 years of experience, must be repeated here today by all of those who have known Dr. Walther for many years: "that in all his addresses he proves himself to be gracious, friendly and pleasant and not at all impudent, stormy, stubborn or quarrelsome, and yet full of seriousness and bravery in his words and gestures. Therefore it is obvious that the harshness he uses against the enemies of pure doctrine in the Scriptures was not of a quarrelsome and malicious mind, but of a great seriousness and zeal for the truth." Since *Der Lutheraner* and *Lehre und Wehre* served partly a different purpose than the sermons which Dr. Walther preaches in his congregation in St. Louis, some see with astonishment that

in these doctrinal sermons, which do not leave anyone's heart empty and which especially strengthen the state of grace of Christians, there is little explicit polemics, *) as Dr. Walther also warns against untimely polemics in his *Pastoral Theology*, which has also appeared in print. But he preaches the Law with the seriousness of conscience, and again he preaches the Gospel without reservation, so that even the most grieving sinner may find comfort and peace. — In this, too, Dr. Walther's effectiveness is shown to be an edifying and reformatory one. There are many who would rather expose infirmities than know how to apply the right medicine for the defects, but Dr. Walther, through his word and testimony, has already done so much in the vast North America by the grace of God that other synods have begun to be ashamed of their syncretism of religion-mongering and have listened to the voice of the Missouri Synod. Already ten years ago [1874] Dr. Krauth, the now sainted President of the General Council, exclaimed in a synod address: "Coming generations will still reverently call the names Walther and Wyneken." While other theologians, who had already attended some secondary and lower schools, were almost helpless in the face of the local sectarian turmoil, and most of them believed that the peculiarity of the Lutheran Church was that it did not have its own doctrines and customs, i.e. given to

*) In his homiletic characterizations of Dr. Walther's sermons, [Dr. A. Brömel](#) gives the following verdict: "Walther is as orthodox as Johann Gerhard, but also as fervent as a Pietist, as correct in form, as a university or court preacher, and yet as popular as Luther himself. If the Lutheran Church wants to bring its doctrine back to the people, it will have to be as faithful and certain in its doctrine and as appealing and contemporary in form as Walther is. Walther is a model preacher in the Lutheran Church. How different it would be in Germany for the Lutheran Church if many such sermons were delivered. Dr. Walther works in such a way in these doctrinal sermons that each sermon forms a whole, whereby finally the whole counsel of God is presented in all directions and used for the edification of the listeners."

indifferentism and to dead unconcern in matters of faith. Walther began to bring before friend and foe the apostolic, catholic character of the Lutheran Church into the light and to edify hearts in the right united faith, which suffers no union with false believers. While some sought support in all sorts of model constitutions, according to which synods and congregations were to be tailored, Dr. Walther showed that in the spiritual priesthood of all Christians who want to thank their God for His good deeds and proclaim His name, the foundation was given on which a truly evangelical church government must be initiated. Under his organizational hand, a healthy synodical and congregational life was first formed in this century, whereby both the pride of the parish priest, which insists on official authority, and the carnal lay conceit are averted, but the Word of God, to which all preachers and congregation members willingly submit, retains dominion. Just as Luther once reminded the so-called lay Christians of their spiritual priesthood, and again brought this to honor over against the Roman mass priests, so Dr. Walther sought out again the rights and duties of spiritual priests, to whom everything belongs that Christ acquired with his blood and endowed through his Word, and through this he demonstrated the certainty of the divine means of grace, the guarantee for their lawful administration in public ministry, and finally also the firm assurance of the grace of God given in the Word. Already when he fortified the fearful and despondent hearts in Perry County through this in faith and there immediately the congregations which were already threatening to dissolve completely blossomed anew, he had recognized that for this purpose the Church of the Reformation, as the Church of the pure Word, must come to renewed strength. Later Walther wrote the book: [*The Proper Form of an Evangelical Lutheran Local Congregation Independent of the State*](#), [German original: [*Die rechte Gestalt einer vom Staat unabhängigen evangelisch-lutherischen Ortsgemeinde*](#)] in which Walther gives the necessary guidance for the organization and

activities of a Lutheran congregational life, with Scriptural evidence and testimonies from Luther and other faithful teachers. In Germany, one side has complained that Dr. Walther is so averse to scientific progress, as R. Hoffmann, for example, believes that in Germany today we have overcome many a weakness of the old, and that we should also initiate something new. But one should rather be surprised that Dr. Walther, precisely because he went back to Luther's position according to the Scriptures, not only met with intuitive certainty (insightful spirit) and certainty in all the doctrinal disputes that arose, but that he also, through his testimony, silenced the stormy waves that had set the party spirits in motion. "Missourian theology is actually Walther's theology, but the Synod professed it in all respects," writes R. Hoffmann, and since it is said that nowadays one scholar stands on the shoulders of another, one might be tempted to ask, where is there in the present day a master to whom Dr. Walther in turn owes much? In this century one finds only one well-known theologian with whom Dr. Walther, while he was still in Germany, was in contact, Dr. [Rudelbach](#), who looked at Stephan with a shaking of his head, had, as we have been told by credible sources, recognized in Walther at that time already the man who would stand at the head of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church. In Rudelbach's writings, too, there are hints that the spiritual priesthood, which after all constituted the innermost circle of the Church, was being pressed by today's state church. Rudelbach regrets that today's consistories, instead of preserving Christian freedom and forming a representation of the laity, as they were supposed to do according to Luther's intention, have helped the Lutheran Church to a shameful servitude. — Also with [Spener](#) one finds complaints about the pressure which the state church exerts on the Christians with a living faith, since they are also spiritual priests. But while in

Germany, namely on the part of the Pietists of Halle and others in the above-mentioned way, the right of the spiritual priesthood was set against the official authority of the pastors, Dr. Walther on the other hand proves that according to Scripture the public preaching office is rooted in the spiritual priesthood of Christians. He also shows to spiritual priests the barriers that prevent it from breaking the divine order of the preaching office, and even shows them that it has fulfill its duty above all things by establishing the public preaching office. — Already in the Smalcald Articles, the right of the congregation, which is "more than its servants" and is to elect them, is based on the spiritual priesthood which the congregation originally and directly possesses. Furthermore, Dr. Walther refers to the many passages in Luther's works, in which this Christ as the Bridegroom, the congregation as Christ's Bride who has the keys to the rooms and goods of the house directly and essentially from Christ himself, and the preacher as the steward appointed by the congregation in the divine order, are represented in countless passages. It is precisely that which Luther, in his heroic preaching proclaims as his testimony, that Dr. Walther compiled in systematic theology, confirmed by Scriptural evidence and clearly presented before the eyes of everyone. It is evident how full of blessing this labor has proved itself to this day, that the doctrine of the old reformer was resurrected from the grave in this country, where the enemies of the Lutheran Church wanted to keep him closed. Just as Walther gained his theological skill and security from his youth on under sharp struggles, and recognized the truth in Luther's doctrine by the grace of God, so he also points his students to the pure and clear doctrine of Luther as the precious heritage which our church has carried off from the fight with the papacy. Luther is regarded by him as the most powerful interpreter of Scripture, who has remained unchangingly faithful to the once recognized truth, and, depending on the nature of those with whom he spoke, emphasized now one side, now another more or less. Especially important

is that Dr. Walther never intended to found his own school in the newer sense of the word. The man who first broke the fetters of the Stephanist hierarchy, and who was then called upon to tear apart the even finer web of Graubau's Romanism, who at all times championed the freedom of the Christian man from all human statutes, is also enemy of all spiritless hero-worship [*geistlosen Nachbeterei*] among his students, and does not want anyone to swear on his (Dr. Walther's) words as on the words of the Master (*in verba magistri jurare*). Rather, he always kept in mind that also within the Missouri Synod the word of Matt. 23:8 applies: "one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren." The members of the Synod must confess: "Dr. Walther worked among us in such a way that if he brought new innovations, he would immediately lose all influence on us; the only reason why people followed him was because they saw that he wanted to be nothing but a disciple of Luther." — One sometimes hears in Germany that the Missourians are independent. It is true that we know of no other dependence in matters of faith and doctrine than that, as Luther's Large Catechism says of the communion of saints, that we are all under the same Head Christ, we do not associate our doctrine with any one person, but we want to be all the more faithful to the Word of God, through whose enlightenment preachers and church members come more and more to the true freedom of the children of God. This is the independentism that inspired the Lutheran Reformation.

Despite the above-mentioned dismissal of Missourian theology, [R. Hoffmann](#) must draw the following picture of [Dr. Walther](#) on page 24 of his writing: "Walther is a faithful son of the German Reformation; having emerged from the Saxon Lutheran Church, he separates in Lutheranism the genuine continuation and resurrection of pure apostolic original Christianity. Called from the beginning to lead his fellow believers in America, he has maintained his outstanding position with honor, and with iron diligence has developed an astonishing wealth of thorough

erudition. He has complete command of his Augustine and Luther and has such a profound knowledge of Old Lutheran dogmatists as hardly any theologian of our time. Equipped with the gifts of sharp dialectic, skilful presentation and a great eloquence sustained by the warmth of conviction, it was easy for him to subdue the spirits." To all this we add the following. If Dr. Walther had ever wanted to bring forth any new innovation, or to make any so-called progress in the sense and spirit of today's German scholars, the last word of R. Hoffmann would be very dangerous. Walther, however, remained in all points of doctrine on the old foundation of the apostles and prophets, and he also recognizes in theology not a science, for which the innovators consider it to be, but a spiritual skill (*habitus*). The rock on which the Church is built and will be built to the end is the unchanging truth; to this truth belongs every doctrine of faith revealed in Scripture, which is why Dr. Walther also insists that the entire council of God must be known and asserted by the Church. It is the enemies of the truth who change their position, and therefore the doctrine of the Scriptures must be symbolically applied now from to one side, now from to the other. However, in the long period of 44 years in which Dr. Walther's public activity has been present in many journals, books and sermons, one always finds the same foundation for faith and doctrine presented and asserted, whereas today's mediating theologians who want to unite Christ and Belial change their so-called standpoint within a few years without timidity, and mislead the minds of those who follow them to doubt the truth. The writer of these lines therefore already noted this in [Lehre und Wehre, February 1882 \[p. 79](#): "... *Geister nicht sich, sondern dem Wort Gottes unterthan macht; ...*"]: "Walther does not make the spirits subject to himself but to the Word of God, but he knows how to teach it so forcefully and clearly that the truth must prove its irresistible power, and doubt gives way to it,

what seems to some to be difficult, light, and the uncertain finally becomes certain! Just as he experienced it in himself, so Walther always aims in the classroom and in the church that hearts may become firm, which according to Scripture is a precious thing, a gift for which we cannot thank God enough!”

IV. [^](#)

Friedrich Conrad Dietrich Wyneken, the father of the German-American mission. [[Arrival in America](#) (93); [First missionary journey](#) (94); [Fight against Methodists](#) (98); [Description of Methodist revival](#) (99); [Plea for Distressed Lutherans in America](#) (103); [Remarks on Wyneken’s plea – Germany and Loehe respond, Adam Ernst](#) (107); [Sihler to America](#) (110); [Craemer arrives, Indian mission - Frankenmuth](#) (112); [Wyneken’s later work](#) (114); [W. called to St. Louis](#) (115); [W. retires, his passing](#) (118)]

How did it come about that a Synod was formed, whose territory now extends from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, and from Canada to the southernmost states of the North American Union? So some readers may want to ask. The Saxon pastors who have been reported up to now did not enter this country as missionaries, but were from the very beginning connected with their congregations, located in a small spot of the territory through which the Mississippi flows. It was significant that the city of St. Louis was the first meeting place for Saxon emigration, a city which now forms a central point between the east and west of North America; but at that time, around 1840, the number of Germans in the state of Missouri was still small, and even in neighboring Illinois, where so many German-Lutheran congregations now flourish, immigration was in its first beginnings. Large numbers of Germans had already settled not only in the old Pennsylvanian state, but also in Ohio, Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin. Besides New-York and Philadelphia, Baltimore was also a maritime city at that time, where many German immigrants landed. In the same year 1838, in which half a year

later the Saxons landed in New Orleans, a man in Baltimore entered the soil of America, driven by the love of Christ, not seeking rest and gain, not honor nor recognition, but, as he later confessed to a friend, only the one thing he had made it his life's mission, to consume himself in the service of the Savior for the benefit of the brothers. His mission was primarily to gather again the scattered children of the Lutheran Church.

[Friedrich Conrad Dietrich Wyneken](#) was born on 13 May 1810 in Verden, in the Kingdom of Hanover, where he spent his youth until he left university. He studied theology in Göttingen and Halle, but absorbed very little of the true doctrines of God. Already in Halle he had been instructed in Jesus by Professor Tholuck; but when, after completing his university studies, he became the tutor of a civil servant, he was so little furthered in the right knowledge of salvation that, when he taught the boys entrusted to him in the biblical story, he began with the books of Maccabees. Only in the house of the pastor and consistory councillor von Hanfstengel, in which he also entered a little later as a tutor, did he get to know Jesus and the way of salvation more completely. With his own determination, he now turned away from the world completely and tried with all seriousness to follow his Saviour on the narrow way. As tutor, as educator of a noble boy with whom he travelled through part of France and Italy, and as temporary headmaster of the Latin school in [Bremervörde](#), he had many opportunities to grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ and to confess his faith. It was the Bible from which he now learned true theology, through which the Holy Spirit made him a true theologian or God's man.

When Wyneken read much of the church plight of German Lutherans in the United States of North America in mission papers at home, the great misery of these

people went to his heart, and the intimate love for his Saviour soon drove him to leave his old mother, brothers and sisters, comfortable lives and bright prospects to serve the church-deserted German Lutherans in love in a far off land.

[↑] When he landed in Baltimore in 1838, accompanied by the candidate C. W. Wolf, Wyneken was completely unknown there. He now wandered the streets looking for Lutheran churches. At first he got into the middle of an Otterbein Methodist [[Philip William Otterbein](#)] meeting, which he soon left again. A German whom he met and whom he addresses referred him to Pastor Johann Haesbert, who had founded the [Second Evangelical Lutheran St. Paul's congregation](#) a few years earlier.

Arriving at Haesbert's house, Wyneken and Wolf explained that they were missionaries and had set out to visit German Lutherans in the West and gather them into churches.

Haesbert looked at them with suspicion, for even then there were many spiritual vagabonds who, pretending to want to help the people, were only looking for money and a life of ease.

Soon, however, Wyneken's open, friendly manner appealed to Haesbert; he took a liking to the strangers and let them remain with him. The next Sunday Wolf preached in St. Paul's Church. The following week Haesbert fell ill and asked Wyneken to stay with him until he had recovered. But the recovery was delayed. Haesbert had to leave the city and move to the country to find the necessary rest. Wyneken took care of the church for about six weeks and visited the sick pastor diligently. Both got to know each other more and more and become friends, loving each other deeply in brotherly love.

When Haesbert was able to administer his office himself again, he was reluctant to let his new friend go. But Wyneken wanted to, and had to leave if he was to start his missionary labors before the rough autumn weather came. Then Haesbert said to him: "You should not travel to the West on your own.

I am writing to the Mission Committee of the Synod of Pennsylvania to send you out as their missionary." This he did, and soon Wyneken was assigned to move to Indiana, to seek out the scattered German "Protestants", preach to them, and, if possible, gather them in churches.

But before we accompany him on his missionary journeys, it is only fair to ask" How could the Lutheran Wyneken serve the church in Baltimore, which was in fact a "Union" church composed of Lutherans and Reformed?

At that time he was not made aware of the communion practice that was usual there. As long as Haesbert was ill, the sacrament was not administered. So Wyneken saw nothing that could have hurt his Lutheran conscience and that would have shown him the true ecclesiastical [*kirchlichen*; Kramer: denominational] status of the congregation. Nor was his mind at that time so seriously directed towards pure doctrine and doctrinal unity; therefore it could easily happen that it escaped his notice during his intercourse with Haesbert where and to what extent the latter was not completely Lutheran.

But Wyneken was already an honest and sincere man at that time. He knew no pretence and was heartily hostile to all lies. Integrity was a dominant trait of this missionary. But his speech, thinking and acting was sanctified by the love of Christ. Free and cheerful, but loving, he consorted with everyone.

[↑] In September 1838 Wyneken began his missionary journey. He was able to use the railway and the canal as far as Pittsburgh. He bought a horse in [Zelienople](#) [[Pennsylvania](#)], "and trotted merrily and cheerfully through the wooded country."

In Ohio he felt compelled to stay for some time, as several German settlements had not had a sermon there for years. The people were so pleased to receive the Word of Life again that Wyneken could not thank the Lord enough for his love to "bring such hungry hearts to Him right at the beginning of his ministry."

After the orders he was given, he went to [Decatur](#), in Adams Co., Ind. From here he wanted

to visit resident Germans. In the forest he meets an American whom he asks about Germans, and he tells him what he wants from them, what he came to the country for, etc. The American says, "If you are a righteous pastor, go into that house, there is a very sick man inside. If however you are like most people who come from Germany, then go over there to the rich wagon driver!"

"I would rather go to the sick man first," Wyneken replied, and went into the house of the sick man named Loeffler. The man was very ill, his wife told him that the sick man could no longer hear or see. Wyneken sat down with him, spoke several words of comfort into his ear and then prayed out loud for him.

Later, the recovered Loeffler confessed that he had understood every word and had been comforted abundantly. So Wyneken appeared as a missionary!

In Loeffler's house, Wyneken asked about other German settlers. They referred him to the "old Buuck" as one who was very fond of churches and pastors. Wyneken set off.

About fifteen miles from the town, he met a little girl in the woods. He stops and says: "Little girl, can you by any chance tell me where Father Buuck lives?" — The child, who had at first looked somewhat suspiciously at the strange man, suddenly radiated with sheer joy, and answered: "O yes; for that is my father." The child now led the stranger to their house, and father Buuck heartily welcomed the man who wanted to bring the Word of God not only to him personally but also to all his neighbors far and wide.

Wyneken never forgot the friendly reception he received at Buucks. This was his home from now on, as often as he came out after "dear Adams County".

At that time there already existed a small so-called Lutheran congregation. The same was also the case in Fort Wayne, which was only a small city at that time. Both congregations

had previously been served by Pastor [Huber](#), a Pennsylvanian-German, who had died not long before Wyneken's arrival, on May 23, 1838. The latter therefore immediately went to Fort Wayne, visited the members of the church there and was immediately requested to stay with them.

However, he referred them to the Mission Society and promised them to return in four weeks to hear what the Mission Society had decided.

On October 2 Wyneken began his first major missionary journey. From Fort Wayne, he first went "to the western part of the State of Ohio"; from there, he went "northwest to [Michigan City](#)"; then he returned "back to the South Bend area (to [St. Joseph's City](#) and [Elkhart](#)) Indiana"; from there he made "a detour to Michigan, from [Mottville](#) to [Niles](#)"; now he turned south and came "to [Crawfordsville](#), Montgomery Co, Indiana"; from there, he took the road "through [Clinton Co.](#)", and moved "up the Wabash to Fort Wayne," where he re-entered on November 16. He had met many abandoned Germans, had encouraged the planting of churches in several places, and had promised to help others if it pleased God. Three weeks before Christmas (1838), the missionary, burning with love, was about to embark on his second mission trip, except that his horse, and Mr. Rudisil's horse was lame, so it could not happen. On January 2, 1839, however, he left to visit the churches near South Bend and Elkhart.

The reader may also consult the synod calendar for German Lutherans of 1877. This calendar contains [the biography of the sainted Wyneken](#) from the pen of his friend [J. C. W. Lindemann](#), who soon after the writing of this biography was also called up to the triumphant church. *) The ecclesiastical conditions of the immigrated Germans were so sad that Wyneken soon afterwards often declared in

* Also included in [Part 4 of Memorial of Faithful Witnesses to Christ](#).

Germany that some fall back into paganism, others become the prey of the enthusiasts, especially the Methodists. But Wyneken did not preach in vain. He became a saving messenger of God to many, and still today hundreds of fathers and mothers in Indiana, where he usually traveled through six counties, remember the intrepid, loving man who did not shy away from bad weather or bad roads to preach the joyful message of Christ to them; who himself became poorer and poorer to make them rich; who endured the greatest adversity to bring them to peace with God. After being called to be their pastor by the churches in and around [Fort Wayne, Indiana](#), this city and its surroundings became his main area of activity. However, in those days everything was very poorly arranged, Wyneken's small chamber was much too small for him to settle down there with the confirmands. After some time he was given a house, which was the first Lutheran parsonage in that area, namely a small log house, 16' by 8'. The cracks between the blocks were stuffed with moss, with a rough floor and no windows. If the pastor wanted to study, read or write, the door had to remain open. In this house, Lindemann testified, Wyneken often spent quite happy hours. As he often said later on, when he later found everything so different in that area (which now often had not only comfort but also luxury), this grieved him in memory of the old times, because they were the best of his life. As great as his sphere of activity took in great dimensions, especially from the time when his fiery eloquence moved many hearts and hands in Germany to give the German fellow Christians in America the bread of life, so faithfully and in detail he was again a pastor. He could urge the stranger and the wrongdoer to leave the path of sin and throw themselves into the arms of Jesus Christ. He used to take the hand of the one to whom he spoke;

or he grabbed him by the coat, or vest button, or stuck his finger in a buttonhole, holding on to the person he was talking to. In doing so, he spoke in secret, insistently, and pressed for a quick decision. Among the many examples of how quickly he was able to shake even unbelievers by his testimony, only one from that Calendar of 1877 is mentioned. When he had once been in Meyer's pharmacy in Fort Wayne and was about to leave, a man came up to Wyneken and asked with a self-important air: "Tell me, Pastor, do you really believe what you preach? I don't believe it." Wyneken replied immediately, "And when the devil has you by the throat and is pulling you into hell, you just scream away and scream away, 'I don't believe it, I don't believe it, I don't believe it'." With that, Wyneken got on his horse and rode away. The wise man also left; but after a few days he returned to the pharmacy, asked for Wyneken, and said, "The man has made me uneasy; I must speak to him." This came about, and he became a believer.

[↑] An inexperienced person might think that such a man, through whose ministry so many hearts have been converted, was probably on good terms with the Methodists. Wyneken was, however, the first to stop this sect not only in America, but also in Germany, where he opened the eyes of many about this soul-destroying enthusiasm. Up to that time, Christian circles in Germany had been accustomed to seeing Methodism as the dominant form of American Christianity, which, although it had its own peculiarities, was nevertheless aimed at true repentance and conversion. Many pastors in the German regional churches also used to relegate the emigrants, who took leave of them, to the Methodists. Even the determined Pastor Mallet in Bremen (who was Reformed) resented Pastor Wyneken when he confronted the Methodists. It was characteristic of Wyneken's future testimony that he would, without knowing it, fall among the Otterbein people in Baltimore, and was asked by them: "Well, Brother Wyneken, how

has it pleased thee?," made the following judgement of their doings: "I do not know whether it is from God or the devil! Already in his letters Wyneken tried to win several more workers for his master's vineyard. Finally, after he had obtained a temporary administrator for Fort Wayne, he succeeded in October 1841 in embarking for Germany, where he sought to win over men who would be willing to relieve the Church's distress in America through faithful missionary service. This was the aim of his verbal lectures and petitions, which he addressed not only to his close fellow countrymen in Hanover, but also to Dresden, where a missionary association for North America was formed, and finally to Bavaria, where he succeeded in winning over the pastor Loehe zu Neudettelsau completely for the German-American mission. During this journey, Wyneken issued a writing whose words are filled with such a warm love for his abandoned fellow believers that many hearts in Germany were awakened to pray and work for America. Moreover, Wyneken warned his Germans in particular about the Methodists, and described their activities so vividly that from that time on false prophets were recognized in Lutheran circles in these enthusiasts, who desired nothing more eagerly than they did in Germany, which they regarded as their disgrace, to hold their camp meetings, and to erect the fear bench under the appearance of religion in place of a worthy celebration of Holy Communion. Wyneken told the German Lutherans that as punishment for your unkindness and lukewarmness you will be given to these Methodists who look over the water much more greedily for you than you would look for your fellow believers in America. [[↑](#)] Wyneken described the activities of the Methodists in Germany as follows:

People gather in masses in the open field. Thousands are gathered. Some kind of wagon barricade is whipped up. Booths are set up. The aim is to stay together for 8-14 days. Food is provided. Also

spiritual bread is provided, because there are several preachers to take turns and follow each other until the revival is accomplished. One of the weaker preachers starts, the stronger ones follow. In between they pray and sing. The prayers, the sermons, become longer and louder — the longing for the revival of souls, causing them to scream from deep within the chest. The songs are sung according to worldly, ravishing melodies (e.g. "Rejoice in life" etc.). The excitement increases. Now comes the night, which favors all excitement and enthusiasm. The latter now rises to its peak. There is a call for the conversion of all sinners. Under the singing of furious melodies and the shrieking of the praying people, the treasure which these people should carry with a coats of arms and seals, the mourners' bench, the bench of grace, is brought to the pulpit. The call to conversion is renewed by a preacher. Other preachers rush among the crowd of listeners and testify that it is a false shame that keeps them away, they want to let themselves go and come and escape the wrath. The night, the celebration, the singing, the prayer, — everything works together. The shame is overcome. The bench is filled with kneeling, sobbing, moaning, screaming sinners. Some preachers speak to them, others still walk among the others shouting invitations. Songs, prayers, moans, exclamations, clapping hands constantly increase the tension of the nerves and the stimulation of the senses. Now the "Spirit", as they say, completes his work. The repentant ones fall down as dead, wake up again, jump out of their minds and rejoice in the air, raptures, visions occur — sadness and joy change suddenly and violently. So it goes on for 8 days, 14 days, that is how you save souls! These raving crowds are then the holy church! No more brandy and sin of the flesh, no more Sunday pleasures: the flesh celebrates its triumphs in the revivals, it has found substitutes for everything in participation in the new measures. There is no longer any need for prayer books, sermon books, devotional aids: one

learn to pray in tongues and to rise from the earth in rapt devotion and heartfelt prayer. The whole life becomes a hunt for spiritual pleasures and joy, just as in our country the whole life is a hunt for physical pleasure.

Think of the man Luther among these swarming spirits, who swarm worse than [Münzer](#), and the Anabaptists, worse precisely because this feeling is often connected with a self-deception of Pharisaic self-righteousness! Think of Jesus among these raving spirits, among these frenzied people who also rave in their churches, just as in our country one may only rave on dance floors and in taverns! Think of St. Paul among these mobs, of St. Peter among these apes of Pentecostal enthusiasm!

Pastor W. Loehe writes from that time: “On May 15, 1843, Pastor Wyneken left to return to the hard day's work of an American preacher. It is he, above all, whose personal addresses, his faithful, fiery word in letters and appeals awakened the sleeping love for the North American abandoned. He, this sincere, honest disciple of the Lord, has become dear to us. There are a number of passages from one of his letters that may please our readers””

“I ask you and the rest of the brethren to take me and my wife and child into your intercession, that the Lord may make our departure easier, and guide us well and soundly with His almighty right hand across the sea and into the West, as well as further strengthen and empower me for the blessed proclamation among the forsaken brethren. It is a difficult walk, I cannot deny it, not only in outward appearance, but also with regard to the spiritual life and activity and its struggles, which often make me shudder when I think of going back in. My hope is in the Lord, who has been my strength and power up to now, and I have been kept upright in my poor soul.” Since Pastor Wyneken, especially in his North German homeland, during this journey

had often come into conflict with the Reformed, who in their own way also fought the rationalism customary in the country, he writes the following with reference to them: "Difficult, O how difficult is the struggle with souls whom one loves so dearly, with whom one feels oneself entangled and intertwined in so many ways on the one foundation of life. Certainly, here it is necessary to refrain from everything, everything apparently so glorious, and to take only the Word of God to hand and heart, and to practice obedience and love. May God, the Triune God, help us to do this! May He help us in the right obedience to Him, in the total denial of everything our own, in the obedience to the Word, in the love for the dear, even if erring, to hold fast, by His grace (for that alone can do) to trample all carnal bitterness under our feet, so that the Spirit of God may fight through us alone for the Word and Sacrament, and we may win them by firm witness, but in love. Now we must fight with those with whom we felt almost as one. Oh, these have been bitter hours! And yet, I hope, not without blessing. At least they can serve to make the misery in this world, even among those whom He has sanctified, humble us and awaken a longing for the place where there will be no more need, no more pain, no more crying. Well, the Lord Jesus will not leave His own, but will redeem them from all evil and help them out to His heavenly kingdom." Two years later, Wyneken is back in full activity in Fort Wayne and the surrounding area, writing again to a friend in northern Germany, asking about why they are not doing more for the German-American mission, while the Methodists and Roman Catholics are doing everything possible for their cause! He requests that the Evangelical Lutheran Pastoral Conference in Leipzig address the Lutheran synods, and exclaims: "I am convinced that such a greeting from Germany would have penetrated us here like an electric shock. (A letter was also written in Leipzig at that time, as Wyneken wished). "I beg you," Wyneken continues, "call your

churches into the square; consider how Luther wrote to the nobility of the German nation and what effect this had. I well know that Christianity must come out from within, but I also know that the Word must first enter from without. We are not bold enough in Germany, and you will not become wiser than you are until the Methodists show you, then it will be too late. — [↑] [[William Nast](#)], editor of a German Methodist journal, has gone to Germany to make connections. Keep an eye on him, he will be heard, and if he prints anything against my pamphlet ([*The Plight of the German Lutherans in North America*](#)) [[English translation](#)], send it to me as soon as possible so I can present him as a liar and warn people about him. What I have said, I can answer for as truth on the Last Day. I have had to endure many things. 1) My wife and child are constantly ill. 2) During the time that I have been back here, at least 12-15 Protestants have converted to the Papacy (Germans here in Fort Wayne, they were not in my congregation, but they were in the church, I'm afraid there are two more from my congregation, all by marriage, men and women). Some of them are so dull, even from our congregation, that they are indifferent to it. God in heaven have mercy on us! This is a terrible misery and eats at our hearts. 3) A part has left our congregation and has formed a congregation of Reformed denomination. And this is the most horrible experience that Christianity is so superficial even among believers. It doesn't want to get serious about change, but why do I want to complain about my church members, since I myself am such a miserable subject. 4) The Methodists attack me personally, and now it's back to the New Measure people [[Charles Finney](#)]. One stands too alone, has too much to carry, and has too little encouragement, Lord have mercy on me!

Saturday night.

My dear friend, tomorrow's Gospel (about

the deaf and dumb person) has healed me from my gloom, leaving a wholesome shame in my heart. Why did the Lord sigh? He bore our sins, our diseases, what a terrible burden! He carried them, He felt them, His heart broke under the burden of this feeling, because all the misery of the sinful world was His own. And how did He go on under it? So calmly, so patiently, so kindly, mildly and lovingly, He sighed to His Father, continued to work under the load until His Father called Him away, without grumbling and becoming impatient. What love! what patience of love, what calm perseverance, and I, wretched man, want to become tired, timid and mopey! And doesn't it say: He has done all things well? Is not this praise of what happened a promise of the future? Is it not certain that in the end we shall all cry out: He has done well! O my friend! how wretched are we, what miserable creatures! Lord have mercy on us! O that I had a heart that was still and at rest in God! When will there be a firm foundation in Christ! Pray for me! Why did we not pray together more often when we were together? How shamefully did we deal with God's promises? How sluggish to grasp, since He offers us everything!

It is now Friday afternoon and I could not come to the continuation of this letter earlier. Saturday night I had to stop, my eyes don't let me write with light anymore. On Sunday I arrived here so late in the evening from preaching, teaching children, house baptism, visiting the sick that I had to go straight to bed. On Monday morning I had to ride to a county where I had never been before, which is full of Germans and where the Methodists find a very open field. I had 36 miles to ride on a trail that you can only imagine from your early childhood in our heaths, and then you have to think of trees cut down, washed-out bridges, deep swamps, and tree roots everywhere, to give you at least a shadow of the truth. After twelve hours

in the saddle except for an hour and a quarter, during which I fed my horse without interruption, I finally arrived happily late at night at a Hanoverian countryman's house with my arms and legs bruised. He gave me a sad account of how people everywhere fell to the Methodists and were suddenly inspired by them against our church. (Confirmation etc. is slandered in the most shameful way.) At 10 o'clock the next morning I preached unfortunately only in one meeting because I had a wedding the following day in Fort Wayne. I had to leave six or seven visits unattended, then I put some bread, cheese and coffee in my stomach, set off at 1:30 PM, got soaked through and through, lost my way in the saddest way, had to stop 22 miles from Fort Wayne to dry and rest, left matter-of-factly the next morning, and came home happy after a 5 hour (23 mile) ride, had to change, shave, etc., performed a marriage, visited sick people, came home that evening. Yesterday I had to go on horseback again for baptisms and visits to the sick, had to ride 18-20 miles, came back completely exhausted, could only saw some wood for kitchen use, ate and slept, but had a prayer hour in the evening, and this completely exhausted me, so that I fell asleep on the chair with the pipe in my mouth. This morning I had to give myself a rest, because I felt that I was not able to do anything more. But I had two urgent letters to write, now I am on your letter, then I must visit sick people in the city again. The worst thing is that I feel I can no longer physically go through what I could before. Just think of my mood; my time is sufficiently occupied for my strength and yet people are calling out. Should I let that county become a prey of the Methodists, can I watch and protect my health? And there are hundreds of places like this in the West. The sects are recruited from those who come from Germany, both preachers and laymen. Soon we will no longer be able

to send preachers to any area where the Methodists have not preceded us and the needy have alienated us. And what should we say to the members when they respond to our friendly reproaches: “The Church has left us in our need, these have come. If you have such a good thing, why are you so lazy, and not so eager as those whom you call sects?” And what a storm will break out against the Church, since they are taking over so ragingly fast. O that some of you were here only a year, you would not be so terribly lazy! What has happened in the past years? It may look like much to you. We lack courage in the German church because of the sloth and lack of seriousness. Nor will the newly awakened life of churchly aspiration last, for it testifies in its lack of active participation and real compassion capable of sacrifice that it is not rooted in the depths of a thoroughly converted heart made capable of sacrifice by quite deep repentance. With God there is no respect for the person, and He can and will let Germany and the Lutheran Church pass under the curse as well as the apple of his eye, the Jewish people, and the other once so richly blessed, now devastated, witnesses of His vengeful seriousness; He will well know how to prepare for Himself another refuge on Earth. I think the mistake is that you would like action to be taken, but the ordinary course of life and comfort must not be interrupted. And I believe that at a time like now, when everything is in ruins and the enemy is penetrating the walls from all sides, you must be able to get over it if the morning pipe does not make the room cosy in the usual way, and even the afternoon coffee is omitted. What must the candidates be for miserable subjects, who have heard of this distress and who do not yet have a permanent position in Germany, who are not prevented from doing so even by sickness, that they do not come out? It is incomprehensible to me how they can still be seen in a decent society

and not a constant blush of shame betrays their guilty conscience. They should indeed come by dozens and the rich should gather together to support them, yes, in such need such a call should be made publicly to the rich that they should fear that every tidbit in their expensive societies would get stuck in their gullet and they would be suffocated by a righteous judgment of God that they would waste such things while thousands would languish spiritually.

[↑] It might seem that Pastor F. Wyneken had a harsh word with the German Lutherans, especially the candidates, when reading the above letters he sent to those from Fort Wayne; but no one was more severe on himself than Wyneken. He wished for the voice of a trumpet to speak, and lamented that he could not have better advised his friends on the vital cause of the German-American mission! That is why he was allowed to speak so earnestly and ask in his address: “Is it so cold in Germany that the love that is planted in every breast, the love of blood relatives, no longer flourishes? Have the people forgotten the German way? Have they transformed the fatherland of family love?” And Germany has not failed to provide an answer. First of all, money contributions from [Pastor Wucherer](#), [Dr. Brandt](#) and [Pastor Loehe](#) in Neudettelsau flow together for the best of this mission. Finally, around Pentecost 1841, the first man willing to lay down his soul for the mission among the emigrated Germans came to Pastor Loehe. The same was not a candidate, because he had learned a trade, but he also loved his Saviour early on and had already come to the Herrenhut congregation of Ebersdorf, because he hoped for greater benefit for his Christian life there than within the state church. However, he recognized the advantage of the Lutheran Church by comparing it with the doctrine and conditions of the Herrnhut people, and when he saw Wyneken's call in [Asch, in Bohemia](#), it went straight to his heart and his decision was clear. This man is the now greying pastor [Adam](#)

[Ernst, \[Find-A-Grave\]](#) the founder of the Lutheran "Volksblatt" published in Canada and the first president of the Canadian District of the Missouri Synod, which was formed three years ago. He was born in [Dettingen](#), where his pastor gave him the testimony that he had always been a diligent pupil in the instruction of children (*Christenlehre*). His friends rejoiced that he was willing to help the abandoned brethren in America and finally sent him to [Windsbach](#), and from there to Pastor Loehe, the warm friend and benefactor of the American emigrants. There, in Neudettelsau, he began to study hard in July 1841, although he declared that he was quite content to serve as a schoolteacher in America. A. Ernst was soon joined by G. Burger, who took part in the lessons on Pastor Wucherer's recommendation. They read and studied many church-historical writings, studied doctrine and other things with zeal, and finally they were sent out together, after a farewell party was organized on July 11, 1842 in the presence of participating members of the congregation. Already in Neuendettelsau they had been a blessing to many. Pastor Loehe gave them the testimony that they had directed the message of peace to many a sick and dying bed, and that they had also been a true blessing for their families. The time of the first love for the American mission had dawned over in Neuendettelsau, and Pastor Loehe was happy that the spiritual priesthood began to flourish so strongly in and through these missionary pupils, whose number was increasing. The surroundings of Pastor Loehe, who later on was reluctant to see the spiritual independence of the American Lutherans, did not yet form an appropriate space for his social standing, and the reports in the church papers prefer to dwell on the letters that Adam Ernst sent to Pastor Loehe and Wucherer from Columbus and from the [congregation of Neudettelsau in the state of Ohio](#), which he had organized. On September 26 Ernst and Burger arrived in New York, where Pastor Stohlmann advised them to go to Columbus, Ohio, so that they would be trained as pastors in the theological seminary there,

preachers, for as mere school teachers they would find little entrance with the Germans. When he arrived in Columbus, Burger was admitted as a student to the theological seminary, but Ernst stuck to his decision to stay in school, and lo and behold, in a few days he managed to collect a school of ninety children, and the Columbus professors wrote to Germany that more such people should be sent to them. The school, which Ernst had started, was later continued by Baumgart, who was born of Jewish parents, came to the knowledge of the truth through God's gracious footsteps and was also sent out by Pastors Loehe and Wucherer. A. Ernst, however, was to become a pastor according to God's will, yes, he was already a pastor before he dared to ordain himself. At the beginning of June 1843 he wrote: "I have something in my eye. Through a man who had a boy in my school, I learned that thirty English miles from here was a settlement of Germans, almost all of whom were from the same area where I myself came from. They are middle-class Germans who have not yet forgotten the German custom, along with a few Hesse-Darmstadters and Württembergers, the whole number being forty families. A large number of young people are flourishing among them. These people wish with all their hearts to have a service among themselves. For this I have a fact to state; because a farmer comes and reads a sermon every Sunday, as often as the weather permits. They have rejected the offers of the sects, which are already seeking entrance. Why do they not yet have a pastor? Because they are too weak to entertain one. It is rare to find money among them, but food is abundant. Should we let these people sit and wait?" So A. Ernst asks and further reports how he visited these people and told them why he had come to this country and why he had just come to them. The main objection, that they were too poor to be able to keep him, he brushed aside by promising to serve them in church and school for a whole year free of charge from the day he arrived. Only that he had something

to eat, he would give it to them. Then they got their desire and courage and all were happy. Finally, Ernst said that the Synod, from which he had to take his exams, could still cause him an obstacle. Professors Winker and Schaefer had encouraged him. Strangely enough, the Synod demanded that a candidate must first obtain two different licenses from the Synod before he could administer the sacraments. Ernst was to obtain the so-called catechist license first. Although the Ohio Synod, by virtue of such circumlocution, brought him little encouragement (it was believed that by such measures the vagabonds could be kept away), Ernst nevertheless worked in that [congregation near Marysville, Ohio](#), in great blessing. This American Neuendettelsau, said Loehe, offered a refuge for the emigrants who loved the Word of God. He also published a report of a church dedication held at Neuendettelsau. The pastor finally succeeded in obtaining ordination, and his house became the starting point for the following missionary trainees [*Sendboten*], who under Pastor Ernst's guidance could now orient themselves more quickly. [↑] One of the first to travel from him was [Dr. W. Sihler](#) [[pic](#)]. Whoever wants to get to know this man's resumé, may only refer to and read the book [Lebenslauf von W. Sihler](#) [[Google Books](#), [HathiTrust](#)] (*Curriculum vitae* of [W. Sihler](#)), published in St. Louis and New York in two volumes. Although he was not a student of geology in Germany, but was partly in military school, partly engaged in philosophical and philological studies, and was already a teacher at a grammar school in Dresden, from the time of his conversion he took the study of the Word of God very seriously, and made such an impression on Pastor Loehe, whom he visited shortly before his departure for America, that Loehe hoped that Dr. Sihler would be used as a professor at the seminary in Columbus, as the *Church Notices* [[Kirchliche Mitteilungen](#), [Google Books](#)] report. However, it should come differently. In Columbus, Ohio, there was never to be a permanent place for truly German theologians, which

Professor Winkler had also to learn about this. Sihler, however, brought so much salt and sober openness with him on every step he took in America that the people who did not let themselves be punished and awakened were glad when they were no longer disturbed in their mechanical sloppiness by the presence of this man. After Dr. Sihler had visited the pastors Wagenhals, Spielmann and Lehmann from Columbus, and through the latter had been made aware of a preacherless settlement in Pomeroy, he left for Pomeroy at the end of December 1843, and came under a settlement of [Rhenish-Bavarians](#) who worked in the coal mines there. Sihler preached both in the town and in the country, and after he had preached, he did not conceal from the people who were unified by birth that he would only preach the Lutheran doctrine if called by them. Despite this declaration, he was called with one accord in both places and on January 1, 1844 he delivered his inaugural sermon on John 3:16: "For God so loved the world," etc. Sihler reports about his ministry there, how he was at first glad that he was only allowed to preach the Word of God into this mass, how he gradually urged them to be disciplined, and finally also, before he distributed Holy Communion, gave thorough instruction about it. Although a part of them held on to the Reformed error and therefore left the congregation, most of them also gave God the glory in this doctrine and from now on confessed themselves as members of the Lutheran Church. It was precisely from this time on that the congregation gained more support and shape, and Sihler rejected many a call in town and country, which he received at that time as a result of his written essays that appeared in the *Lutheran Church Newspaper* of Pittsburgh [*"Lutherischen Kirchenzeitung"* - ? [unknown](#)]. At that time also his "Conversations of two Lutherans about Methodism" were written, because he got to know these fluttering and swarming spirits many times personally, and took insight from their meetings. Sihler did not want to stand alone; since Pastor Ernst and some like-minded people were already members of the Ohio Synod, he attended the meeting of the Ohio Synod in Germantown. The pastor at that time was Andreas

Henkel, a Freemason who, as late as 1854, boasted that he had passed through all the stages of this secret society. In its constitution, however, this synod acknowledged all the symbolic books of the Lutheran Church, which is why Sihler now sought ordination and agreed to take an exam. The examination was waived after he presented a Latin testimony that Dr. Rudelbach had written to him; but when he was questioned about the license that was to precede ordination, he made the Synod's correct position clear, namely that it had no right to refuse ordination to someone whom it (the Synod) itself considered to be orthodox, doctrinaire, and impeccable, and who had already received a proper call from a congregation. Sihler was well aware that the right of call was inherent in the congregation concerned, but that the act of ordination was a good, human order and public confirmation of the call. For these and other reasons, he declared that he would not accept a license, whatever explanation was received, and he was immediately ordained and duly included into the Ohio Synod. [↑] Meanwhile, several emissaries soon arrived who came into contact with another synod, namely the Synod of Michigan. Finally also a theological candidate for the missionary service in America, namely the today's professor [August Craemer](#), came forward. He had already spent several years in England and is described as a man who has proven himself through study and fierce battles, and who is in every respect suited to establish a branch in Michigan at the head of a Lutheran emigration society. Even before the dispatch of this colony, Pastor Loehe had already contacted Pastor Schmid in Ann Arbor, the President of the Michigan Synod, and received from him the assurance that all the members of the Synod would be firmly pledged to all the symbols of our Church, and that their missionaries would be committed to it. To this end, Pastor

Loeche wanted to begin a heathen mission together with Pastor Schmidt on the Indian reservations of Michigan. Since one had often feared the accusation that the heathen mission would suffer because of the German-American inner mission, the *Church Notices* [[Kirchliche Mitteilungen](#), [Google Books](#)] reported with joy that on April 20, 1845 a group of Franconian farmers had embarked in Bremerhaven with the intention of settling as a missionary colony among the Indians of Michigan. It was thought that the Chippeway Indians were already open to the Gospel and [Frankenmuth](#) was founded near them. Pastor A. Craemer landed with his people in New York on June 8, 1845, and they left for Michigan on the 12th of the same month. In Monroe they were joyfully welcomed by Loeche's emissaries, Pastor [Hattstedt](#) and his congregation, and in Saginaw City by Missionary [Auch](#), who became Pastor Craemer's helper in the Indian mission. In 1847 they were joined by [Baierlein](#) [[PIC](#)], a missionary sent by the [Leipzig Missionary Committee](#). At the invitation of an Indian chief, a school building was built on the Pine River and the Bethany Station was founded. On July 4, 1848, 17 Franconian families, led by a faithful pastor, [F. Sievers](#) [[pic](#)], a native of Hanover, moved into what is now [Frankenlust](#). In addition, Amelith, southwest of Frankenlust, was founded. Since these congregations placed themselves on the foundation of the Lutheran Confessions out of conviction, the blessing that is found in a free [[of the State](#)] church, where one follows the Word for the sake of the Word, and not just for the sake of external police coercion, was soon felt. Through this missionary activity the mouth of those who see in the Lutherans only dead orthodoxists who are incapable of any good work was also closed. With great love the Indian mission was taken on in Frankenmuth and Bethany, and the day on which several Indians and their children were baptized was always a feast day for the whole congregation. It was well recognized that in regard to the

Inner missions and missions among the heathen the word applies: “One should do one thing and not leave the other!” And here the promise was fulfilled: “Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance.” Matt. 13:12.

[↑] Since the life and work of the sainted Fr. Wyneken is closely linked to the history of the Missouri Synod, the following should be noted about his later activity.

After the above-mentioned [[p. 93-94](#)] Pastor Haesbert in Baltimore suddenly resigned his office in December 1844 and went to South America, the local congregation appointed Pastor Wyneken in his place. With a heavy heart the people of Fort Wayne agreed to release “their dear Wyneken” to Baltimore. Only the thought “our God wills it so” could comfort them. On March 9, 1845, Wyneken was publicly inducted into his office as Lutheran pastor by the old Dr. [Daniel Kurtz](#). Although many hearts were trusting him, it soon became clear to Pastor Wyneken that he would have to fight many a battle in Baltimore. His congregation had until then been “united” in the practice of the Lord's Supper, in a way that Dr. Kurtz and others of the General Synod had spent on “American Lutheranism”. The following chapter will report on Pastor Wyneken's testimony to the General Synod, but he also had to make it clear to the congregation for the first time that Reformed and Lutherans could not possibly be members of the same congregation. There were many storms until those who wanted to remain Reformed finally left the congregation. Wyneken also found a particularly fierce opponent in the “United” Pastor [Weyl](#) in Baltimore. He spread the rumour that Wyneken was an “Old-Lutheran”, a disguised Jesuit, who also intended to return his congregation to the Pope, as can be seen from the fact that he wore a pulpit gown and made the sign of the cross when he pronounced the benediction. In a similar way Weyl spoke in the “Shepherd's Voice” [*“Hirtenstimme”*] which he edited. However, he did not achieve his purpose, even though some were encouraged in their enmity against Wyneken. Wyneken's congregation came to appreciate

him more and more, and even non-Lutherans declared that he had remained the victor in his struggle. Wyneken also had to fight against the "secret societies", since several members of his congregation belonged to these lodges. Wyneken showed the dangerous nature of these orders, and he was rewarded for his courageous and friendly approach to these battles. This was especially evident in the church meetings. All the attacks to which he was exposed there bounced off his calm and presence of mind. He did not retreat one step, and was never at a loss for a good answer. Yet he was full of compassion for those who recognized their sin. Nothing annoyed him more than unloving judgments about people who had sinned out of weakness, or about those who still lacked knowledge. He could then rebuke the "righteous" and rebuke those who were wise. — [↑] When Wyneken received a call from the Trinity Church in St. Louis in early 1850, he recognized after a careful examination of all the circumstances that it was God's will to go to St. Louis. On February 24, 1850 he delivered his farewell sermon on 1 Sam 7:12 and on the following [Sunday, Jubilate](#), the inaugural sermon at the new place of his destiny. That same year, after only two years of formal entry into the Missouri Synod, he was elected Synod President at the Fourth Synodical Assembly. In accordance with this important office, he was not only required to preside at the synod assemblies and to carry out various activities from his home during the three years for which he was elected, but also during this time he had to visit all the parishes in the Synod, visit congregations, pastors and schools, "if possible preach a sermon in each congregation himself", and, in addition, "to appear in person as soon as possible" in order to remedy any discrepancies that had arisen, if it was desired in a congregation. To this end, according to his instructions, he should attend pastoral conferences and meetings of district synods, "give advice and answer" on request, etc. During

a period of 14 years he presided at 6 general assemblies, attended 21 district synods, attended Norwegian and other conferences, visited and preached back and forth in the congregations, and was particularly good at showing the way forward with few, often blunt, but always emphatic words. People used to say that in relation to the doctrine for which Prof. Walther brought the right light, Wyneken's word was like thunder following lightning! 'The Lord had also placed him,' writes Prof. Walther in a short obituary, 'as His instrument in these manifold councils to make the Gospel resound loud and clear,' — for this he was a man of action who, after looking at things, was able to take vigorous action. That is why also his visits were often of great success! Just one anecdote from that time may find room here.

It was still at the beginning of his presidential term when Wyneken visited a congregation far to the west. The meeting lasted until midnight. The people talked very violently, it was almost tumultuous, and Wyneken tried in vain to settle the dispute. The meeting finally had to be adjourned as a fruitless one. While the pastor of the congregation, as the last one to leave, put out the lights in the church, President Wyneken stood in the dark vestibule. There he heard some of the most fierce opponents, mostly young people, arguing and talking about wanting to beat him up. Without further reflection, Wyneken suddenly steps in front of them and says: "I want to tell you something: I'm not afraid of the Devil, and you think that I should be afraid of you! You're all pathetic guys," [*"Jungens, ik will ju mal wat seggen: Ik fürchte mi vor den Düvel nich, un ji meent, dat ik mi vor ju fürchten scholl! Ji sin ja ganz erbärmliche Kerels"*] and so on. The men looked at each other in bewilderment; they had gained respect for the Low German President and proved this in the next meeting by submitting to him calmly. So peace was finally established, and one of the disturbers of peace later became a upright member of that congregation. — The writer of these lines heard

only once a sermon from Wyneken's mouth. But it has remained unforgettable to me how, during the Fort Wayne General Synod of 1869, Wyneken warned some 700 synodical delegates on the 15th Sunday after Trinity about the worries of this life, and in particular addressed the preachers that they should not immediately think of horse and buggy [[or cars today](#)] and of a beautiful parsonage! What is certain is that it was the care of the ministry, especially the care of his sermon, that caused him the most concern. He sat and wrote until 12 o'clock at night, and often tore up what he had written when he came out of the pulpit, so that his sermon again did not stick to the last, finished manuscript. He began somewhat uncertainly until a strong word had slipped his lips, for example "We're all up to our ears in miserliness" and now his speech gushed out like a river that runs over rocks and plains. Every muscle in his face, every movement of his hands, the glow of his eyes testified to the fact that he truly cared about the cause, the whole man preached! As Loeber writes, however, he not only painted the natural destruction of man completely unvarnished, he also described the great love of God in Christ, and brought it so close that many a person, after such a sermon, took courage to throw themselves with all their sins into God's arms of grace and to console themselves of the Lord Christ alone. —

Even now many preachers appreciate the advice they received from Wyneken in various official matters, such as, for example, some who thought that they must now enforce what they considered necessary. Wyneken wrote them in short words: "If the stone that lies before you is so heavy that you cannot lift it, just go very gently around it!" In the old congregations where he worked, people still talk about Wyneken's unselfishness and sacrifice, especially how he was concerned with giving and doing good; for example, that once he came riding in stockings to his retiring quarters in Fort Wayne, because he had given away his boots to a poor pedestrian with torn shoes. He once showed how quickly

he was ready in such cases, when, at his request, a number of people took care of a dead person, who was to be buried. When the corpse was being prepared for the coffin, it was found that they had no shroud. Wyneken told people to wait a bit, entered a locked woodshed, and soon came out with a shirt. He himself had buttoned his coat all the way to the top.

[↑] The journey he made to Germany with Prof. Walther in 1851 will be reported in Chapter VIII of this paper. After Wyneken had often asked for dismissal from the Presidium when the general Synod assembled, he placed this office back into the hands of the Synod in 1864, whereupon Prof. Walther was again elected General President (1864-1878). Shortly before this, Wyneken had been elected as pastor by the Trinity Church in West Cleveland. There he took courage and worked in blessing, but it became apparent that his health was suffering noticeably. The congregation, which increased significantly with the arrival of many immigrants, appointed him an assistant preacher, the first being [Heinr. Craemer](#), who, when he received another call, was followed by Wyneken's own son [Heinrich Wyneken](#). The father could no longer be cured of the preaching-sickness, of this challenge, as he himself called it, and therefore asked the congregation, while he was getting weaker and weaker, to make his son the head pastor, but to only let himself be considered an assistant preacher. His chest suffering took over and he became so tired of life that he often said: "This is my only desire: Who will deliver me from the body of this death!" His daily sin was a particular burden to him. The doctors advised that before the winter of 1875 to 1876 came, Wyneken should choose a milder climate, so he went to California, where he had a dear son-in-law in San Francisco in Pastor J. Bühler. Wyneken's wife, Marie née Buuck, followed him in the middle of winter to take care of her husband.

Meanwhile, there was no longer a cure in California for Wyneken's physical life; he convinced himself of this and wished to return to Cleveland. But the same day that was meant to be the day of his departure was to be the day of his death. He died without complaint on the morning of May 4, 1876, at the age of nearly 66. The news of his death passed through the United States in a flash and caused deep sorrow, especially within the Synod. According to the wishes of the Cleveland congregation, the body was brought to Cleveland for burial. After stopping first in St. Louis and then in Fort Wayne and organizing funeral services, the widowed wife arrived in Cleveland with her departed one on May 15th, where Pastor Th. Brohm gave another funeral sermon on Hebr. 13:7. The word still applies today: “Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God!”

V. [^]

The state of affairs in the old synods called Lutheran. The so-called Lutheran [General Synod \(120\)](#), the [Ohio Synod \(125\)](#) [[and its turn to Confessions, Sihler's 6 points \(131\)](#), [Brohm's rebuke \(133\)](#), [Walther's reproof \(134\)](#)]; [The withdrawal of the Franconian Lutherans from the Michigan Synod \(138\)](#) . [[Methodism moves in \(140\)](#)] [The successful fight against the Methodists \(142\)](#).

Even though the emissaries of Loehe had until 1845 at first united themselves with synods that had been called Lutheran by Pastor Loehe, the newly settled Saxon Lutherans were alone for eight years until the Evangelical-Lutheran Missouri Synod was constituted. A reader may ask, why was the establishment of this synod necessary, since there were already Lutherans in North America before that! [The Lutheran Observer](#), the organ of the [General Synod](#), also raised this question and

said, when he came to the Saxon Lutherans, that these Old Lutherans were thoroughly educated old-school people, spotless Orthodox, their theology as exact and straight as only the symbols can make it; the only regret was that they were so stiff that they kept away from the American Lutherans for that very reason. [↑] [Dr. Sihler](#), who at that time had already resigned from the Ohio Synod, as will be reported below, answers the representative of the General Synod in [No. 7](#) and [8, Vol. IV \[1847\] of *Der Lutheraner*](#) among other things: “Surely no one is more sorry than we are that we cannot, with our hearts and good conscience, enter into fraternal fellowship, or even ecclesiastical relations, with all who bear the name of Lutheran here in America. For the Word of God, which alone is to determine our hearts and consciences in all our behavior, forbids us to have any contact with such church fellowship or even only ecclesiastical relations, which causes division and scandal in addition to the doctrine we have learned, Rom. 16:17, and which persistently opposes this doctrine, whether in one or several points. ‘Avoid such,’ it says. Among these, however, are not only the papists and enthusiasts, but also the false brethren, that is, the so-called Lutheran General Synod.” As proof of this, [a document signed by the doctors: S. S. Schmucker, B. Kurz, H. N. Pohlmann and J. G. Morris](#) on behalf of the General Synod was sent to Germany in November 1845. These representatives of the General Synod, founded in 1820, who were accompanied by a professor of the Hartwig Seminary [[or Hartwick](#)], stated officially that although they had examined Luther's doctrinal structure according to God's Word and found it to be essentially correct, they were on common ground with the United Church of Germany. Only essential agreement in opinions on doctrine and life (these men of the General Synod have only doctrinal opinions) is required of them, they do not regard the differences between the Old Lutheran and Reformed Church as essential; and the direction of the

so-called Old Lutheran party seems to them to be behind our modern age. The great Luther had made progress throughout his life and at the end of his career he considered his work to be unfinished. Therefore, one is Evangelical-Lutheran if one searches for his advice and keeps on searching. Luther's particular view of the bodily presence of the Lord in Holy Communion has long since been abandoned by most of her pastors, who believe in a blessing of the Lord in the holy sacrament, and through baptism want to add the subject (the person baptized) to the visible church fellowship, etc. — Although the men of the General Synod, with this official declaration, clearly declare their apostasy to the Reformed doctrine of the sacraments and their rationalistic direction, they nevertheless invoke, in the manner of today's United Church, that the Word of the Bible alone is infallible and that the symbolic books must be subordinated to the divine Word, the General Synod therefore also refrains from obliging its preachers to use the Lutheran symbols. With such people it says: the Bible, nothing but the Bible! Also the Lutherans who are loyal to their confession say: the Bible, but also the whole Bible! Whoever only accepts every Word of the Holy Scriptures as the truth inspired by the Holy Spirit will soon also agree with the Lutheran symbols with respect to the form of the saving doctrine, in the correct understanding of the Bible, because they relate to the Bible in the same way that minted gold relates to the solid gold bar; the confession of the Church is the voice of the Bride, who lets her Yea and Amen follow the Word and will of her heavenly Bridegroom. This response of the Bride must, of course, be as definite and affirmative as Peter's response was when he answered the Lord Christ's question: "We believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God!" [John 6:69] If Peter had said no more than: I believe all that is written, the Lord Christ would not have liked such a declaration!

That is why Dr. Sihler also refutes the objection that

the confession must always remain subordinate to Holy Scripture and is therefore not binding, by stating that we do not consider the symbols to be an original norm of faith in addition to Holy Scripture (this alone is the normative norm, those are the normative norm), we are not orthodoxists or confessionalists, for which we are accused, but we also claim that our symbols are in complete agreement with God's Word in terms of their content, and therefore we also demand that when church servants take up their office they commit themselves to the symbols as their own confession. Sihler counters the cry: 'the Bible and nothing else', as if everyone were free to interpret the truth of salvation for themselves and to take the words of the sacraments in a figurative way, with the question whether the truth about salvation is ambiguous, vacillating and uncertain, as the heathen said of their oracles. Certainly those Lutherans who take a certain Word of the Bible as it is and base their faith on it show more respect for the revealed truth of Scripture than those who claim the meaning of Scripture to be ambiguous and thus leave it in abeyance as to how Scripture is to be understood!

Finally, Dr. Sihler asks all sincere Lutherans who are seeking truth and whose members are also in the General Synod to immerse themselves in the Lutheran symbols and to compare their teachings and defenses with the Holy Scriptures, so that they will soon come to understand on which side the truth is. But to the frivolous spokesmen who insist in their apostasy from the Scriptures, and who consider the revealed Word of God a secondary matter, sometimes in one way, sometimes in another, Dr. Sihler declares in all seriousness that, inasmuch as they persist in such disloyalty, and continue to disturb the Church, they will also be judged on that day by the Words of the Lord Christ, in which he instituted Holy Communion. — Since *The Lutheran Observer* further states that the customs prevailing in the congregations of the Missouri Synod are so rigid and the ceremonies so uniform, as such archaic fellows, which is what the so-called Old Lutherans are thought to be,

and since this reproach recurs more often than not, as if we had forgotten what the Augsburg Confession teaches in Article VII with the: “[It is enough](#),” etc., the following is quoted here from Dr. Sihler's reply: "Our view of the ceremonies is that they are things indifferent [*adiaphora*, *Mitteldinge*], neither commanded nor forbidden by the Lord in a certain form, but left to the freedom of the Church and of each individual congregation to order them to their own liking, as they serve for the edification and also for the discipline of the younger generation. In this area, then, we are by no means so stiff as to insist on an unconditional unity and uniformity, except that we do not, of course, agree to any ceremony which, like the sacrifice of the Mass, the worship of the host, and what presupposes doctrine contrary to Scripture, or which is otherwise practised by the opponents of pure doctrine, as for example, the breaking of bread by the Reformed; so that in this, too, we avoid all evil appearances, as if we were indifferent to the falsifications of the doctrine or the false doctrine of the opponents, by secretly accepting their customs. Moreover, we do not at all insist, for instance, that the same agenda and the same hymnal should be used in all congregations, if only both are in accordance with Scripture and the praying and confessing church speaks in them, but not the individual faith or the opinion of this or that spiritual speaker. — The latter is the case with the Reformed and the Methodists, and with the General Synod, where there is usually only a single person who, with his *ex corde* and clamorous prayers, interposes himself between the Lord and his congregation, and by the captivating, often passionate speech, in which this person cloths his free prayer, which dominates and draws hearts and minds rather than edifying them through the preaching of the pure Word! While the men of the General Synod are indifferent and Reformed in their doctrine, they have become accustomed in their worship practice to the so-called new measures [[Otterbein Methodism](#)] and revivals which are common among the Methodists. Rather than rearing the dear youth in the words of

faith and doctrine, it is more convenient to let the young people grow up without discipline and admonition of the Lord, and consoling oneself with the hope that if a few revivals are hired every year, many a soul will suddenly be shaken and will take refuge in the so-called “mourner's bench” which is respected as far more important than the holy sacrament. One does not consider that the Lord Christ wants to receive his disciples into his kingdom, that they are baptized and that they are taught to keep all that He has commanded. The more the new measures were praised and practiced in the old synods, the less the catechism was practiced; the pastors themselves had long since preferred the English Reformed writings to German Lutheran textbooks. — Since Past. F. Wyneken had belonged for some time to the Synod of the West, which, as a member of the General Synod, also sent delegates to the sessions of the General Synod, he did not fail to bear witness to the truth before this body. In May 1845, a meeting was held in Philadelphia in which he presented a twofold approach to the General Synod in order to purge itself of the accusation that it had fallen away from Lutheran doctrine. Either it should present the books and journals written by Doctors Schmucker and Kurz to the recognized Lutheran doctors Rudelbach and Harless for examination, or the General Synod should disavow those books and the false doctrine contained therein. The General Synod showed no desire for any of these proposals, but rather revealed an undeniable apostasy from Lutheran doctrine and practice. Since both proposals failed, Pastor Wyneken now broke away from the General Synod and declared that from now on he would warn even more resolutely against this Synod, so that whoever loved the truth would not get involved with it. — It was to be regretted that the old Pennsylvanian Synod, which regards Heinrich Melchior Muehlenberg, who had been sent from Halle, as its founder, also joined the General Synod, which also

made the Gettysburg Seminary a prey of the spirit of unionism. Instead of sitting at the feet of the apostles and prophets and taking from Christ the Lord everything that serves for salvation, they stressed works, hence also the friendship with the Methodists was great at that time, just as the Methodist Church is given the testimony in that official letter that it had also proved useful, but it would be more advisable to direct the local immigrants leaving Germany to the congregations of the General Synod. — [\[↑\]](#) In the course of this century a synod was formed which had its seat in Columbus, Ohio, and which had to come into manifold contact with the Lutherans settled in the West for the simple reason that in the 1940s the State of Ohio was regarded as a very suitable place for the settlement of the Germans. As blessed as Muehlenberg's effectiveness was in the last century, the fruit it had borne was already disturbed and spoiled in most places during the storms of the North American Revolution, and whoever still wanted spiritual life in the Pennsylvania congregations often became prey to the Methodists. The seriousness with which Muehlenberg and his co-workers from Halle had pursued pastoral care in the congregations was gone with the following generation. Most of Muehlenberg's children and descendants converted to the Episcopal Church, which was unfortunately regarded as related to Lutheranism! — Nevertheless, the Spirit of God enlightened some preachers who wanted to adhere to the scriptural doctrine of salvation of the Lutheran Church and the Lutheran sacramental doctrine. Paul Henkel is especially mentioned as a steadfast Lutheran of that time. He had been a member of the Pennsylvanian Synod since 1782 and is portrayed as a tireless missionary and self-denying servant of Christ. Already in 1812, eight pastors and three delegates gathered under his leadership in Pastor Weygand's parish, Washington County, Pennsylvania, for a special conference against the then ruling

method of conversion. In 1818, the same Conference considered it its duty to draw up a defence document on the doctrine of Baptism, the Lord's Supper, conversion and prayer. Paul Henkel was entrusted with this work, and the Ohio Synod, which emerged from these conferences by refusing to enter the General Synod in spite of frequent requests and mutual negotiations, had thus acquired a legitimate position. From 1818 to 1830, this Synod existed under the name of a General Conference; its pastors had such an extensive field among the settlers moving to the West that some served 7-9 congregations in different counties. This conference also employed traveling missionaries who served in Ohio and in Virginia, and they recognized the need to found their own Lutheran seminary, because the training that individual young people received from the older preachers, who gave private instruction to such students in addition to their ministry, was quite inadequate. A suitable professor was also found in the person of venerable Wilhelm Schmidt, who is regarded as the founder of the [Lutheran seminary in Columbus, Ohio](#). The teaching at this seminary was to be given in the German language, as the Constitution demanded at the time, and this was not only appropriate to the circumstances, since the Center of the Germans was moving more and more from Pennsylvania to Ohio, but there was also a kind of guarantee that 'with the help of this medium the German-Lutheran Catechism and the love for the German-Lutheran Church would remain valid. Prof. W. Schmidt was called early into eternity, and after him Professors Winkler and Schaefer worked with blessing at Columbus. At the same time, however, when Loehe's first emissaries Adam Ernst, Dr. Sihler and others had entered the Ohio Synod, a so-called English party rose up in the Synod, which thought that the seminary should not remain German and not become Old Lutheran, as it was called.

Although the forefathers and fathers were German, and almost all members of the Ohio Synod were German-speaking, nativism still prevailed, which looked down on German Lutherans as “foreigners”. When Dr. Sihler thought it was time to get serious about Lutheranism, especially when he reproved the unionistic practice of pastors who, in addition to the Lutherans, also served Reformed, or, more frequently, mixed congregations of Lutherans and Reformed, he was answered, for example Pastor Lehmann: “You want to impose principles on us that come from the ‘old country’ (from Germany), we cannot use them here.” Sometimes they tried to make a run in the right direction. When it was discovered that the General Synod English translation of the Catechism with its questions and answers mutilated and disregarded in the parts relating to the Lord's Supper, it was decided to organize a literal translation of the Lutheran Catechism. However, at the same time, also by a synod decision, the "common hymnal" (*gemeinschaftliche Gesangbuch*), as it is called on the title page, published in the territory of the General Synod, was kindly recommended. While it was said that the Synod, as an "Evangelical Lutheran" synod, held to all Lutheran symbols, pastors within the Ohio Synod were not yet committed to the Lutheran Confessions at that time; if the Lutheran-minded urged that this be done, the hearing on such questions was postponed for up to three years. It was finally approved that a few dozen copies of the Book of Concord be sent from Germany, so that the pastors would be enabled to read the Lutheran symbols first, which were very rarely found in a pastor's library at that time. Much more often a textbook or manual of the Freemasons or the Oddfellow Lodge was found there, because some Ohio preachers were not only notaries and agents of various fire and life insurance companies, but also members of the above-mentioned sworn secret societies. Since these secret orders

in their religious exercises (prayers and common "funeral ceremonies) want to deny Christianity in principle, to accept a "supreme being" instead of the triune God, to commit themselves to be able to fraternize with Jews and such people, to substitute a humanistic world religion in the place of Christianity, while they promote Christianity as something sectarian, and so idolatrously cling to and serve their brotherhood that they trample the first commandment underfoot, it was inevitable that the various spirits would clash in the midst of the Ohio Synod. When at the synod assembly in Zanesville an attempt was made to give the Columbus seminary a different form, it was still possible to overcome the friends of so-called American Lutheranism by invoking the original purpose of this seminary. However, Prof. Winkler was soon ousted from this seminary, the Native Germans who had come to this seminary as students were persuaded to leave it and the seminary was suspended until further notice. The doctors of the General Synod refer to this in their letter sent to Germany and believe that the preachers who come over from Germany should not come with the intention of restructuring the American Lutheran Church according to European standards. This would only cause strife and discord. From this it can be seen that the voting leaders of the General Synod also had friends and comrades-in-arms in the Ohio Synod. Although there was no formal affiliation with the General Synod, they refused to call this obviously apostatized synod an unlutheran synod. Since the General Synod at that time called itself the American Lutheran Church, a conference district in Eastern Ohio had brought the question before the Zanesville Synod in 1844: "Which Synods are Lutheran?" However, the completion and answering of the question was postponed until the next year. The Lutherans were particularly annoyed by the fact that since 1842 an agenda

was in use in the Ohio Synod, which was equal to the Union Agenda introduced by the Prussian king with regard to the distribution of Holy Communion, and was even more stale and inferior to the Prussian agenda in many prayers and other formulas. Dr. Sihler, together with Pastors J. A. Ernst, [A. Selle](#), W. Richmann, A. Schmidt, had addressed a written petition to the Ohio Synod gathered in Lancaster, Ohio, protesting against the customary distribution of Holy Communion according to the agenda of the time, which was based on the words: “Christ saith: This is my body”. The meaning of this formula is: everyone can believe and keep what Christ has spoken, whatever he wants! It is clear that such a formula provided desirable information for the so-called communal or mixed congregations, which were usually recorded as “Lutheran and Reformed”; however, because it substituted doubt and ambiguity for confession, the Lutheran-minded put the emphasis on the demand that the Holy Sacrament no longer be administered through the above united distribution formula in the Ohio Synod. The other abuses, the lack of doctrinal discipline, the granting of licenses, etc., could have continued for some time if the Ohio Synod had only agreed to this demand! This was followed by the following decision at the Synod meeting in Lancaster [[in 1844](#)], and the Ohio Synod itself was sufficiently distinguished by this decision.

Firstly, on the first question against the General Synod, “Which Synods are Lutheran?” the synod simply proceeded with the agenda for the day. Secondly, the requested rejection of the United distribution formula was denied and, on the contrary, the use of the Agenda introduced in 1842, which is unchurchly and Calvinistic in all absolution formulas and does not commit to the confessions of the Lutheran Church in the granting of ordination, was recommended to the members of the Synod as being in accordance with their duties! Thirdly, the petition, which a) demands

that the Synod profess all the symbols of the Lutheran Church, b) calls for a unanimous witness against the false sacramental doctrine of the General Synod, c) calls for a thorough reform of the system of candidate examination, d) urges no more serving of Reformed Lutheran congregations, and sees in this an approval of the false union of our time, was delayed and returned by the Synod to the reporting committee. Thereupon the petitioners withdrew their petition and instead made the brief proposal: “That the Ohio Synod henceforth profess all the symbols of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and solemnly commit their candidates to them when ordination is granted.” But also the decision on this proposal was again postponed for three years after it had been negotiated in the ministerium. — As strict as one knew how to deal with parliamentary rules and all sorts of shady tricks in the course of such negotiations, one did not hesitate to disloyally violate the constitution of the Columbus Seminary and to deprive it of the German character it had had from the very beginning. It was clear that even the Ohio Synod had neither ear nor eye for oral and written explanations, so it was now a matter of heart and conscience for the petitioners who had submitted the above-mentioned petition to declare their withdrawal from the Ohio Synod. Eight pastors and a schoolteacher named J. C. Schürmann, who was then in Pittsburgh, signed a declaration of resignation in Cleveland, Ohio, on September 18, 1845, which is printed in [No. 11 of the second year in *Der Lutheraner*](#) ([\[“Kirchliche Nachricht”\]](#)). The declaration concludes with the heartfelt and urgent request that the Synod should not remain in this state, but should consider the welfare of many dearly bought souls and its own responsibility!

While *Der Lutheraner* made this announcement with sadness, while the Ohio Synod, which still seemed most inclined to Lutheranism, hereby indicated that it could not totally agree with righteous Lutherans on the basis of the divine Word, the *Lutheran Standard*,

the organ of the Ohio Synod, judged the resignation of those who had previously seemed repugnant to it as a happy event lying before it. Pastor Loehe was also surprised that this editorial staff, which consisted of Pastors Lehmann, Spielmann and Gruenwald, spoke down from their high horses. [↑] Meanwhile, the departure of the above-mentioned men from the Ohio Synod by God's will also served as an encouragement. In view of the upswing that Lutheranism was now taking place in the West of the country, the Ohio people wanted to show themselves to be Lutheran, and when in 1848 a meeting of the Ohio Synod in Columbus took place, it was decided there: "The Ministry of the General Synod of Ohio undertakes to confess the symbolic books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, both individually and as an ecclesial body, and to interpret Sacred Scripture in accordance with them," and all those who are licensed or ordained shall henceforth be bound by these confessional documents after prior examination. — Since the organ of the General Synod, the *Lutheran Observer*, from its unionist standpoint, immediately accused its dear Ohio brethren of narrow-mindedness and short-sightedness for the sake of this decision, Dr. Sihler took up the pen to defend the Ohio pastors against these unjust attacks of the men of the General Synod. In [No. 2 Vol. 5 of *Der Lutheraner*](#) he proves that this does not mean at all that one wants to grant the symbolic books a position above the Holy Scriptures, since precisely the Lutheran confessional writings in all humility subordinate themselves without exception to the Holy Scriptures and reject the belief in authority based on Papist tradition as anti-Christian. They only want to be witnesses of the "the form of pure words, contained in the Scripture itself." Furthermore, in [number 3 of the same periodical](#), Dr. Sihler demonstrates to the Lutheran Ohio Synod what ecclesial action would be related to that important decision. First of all, as a result of this public and solemn confession, no more mixed congregations should be served, especially

Holy Communion should no longer be given to the Reformed as such, because nobody can approve the doctrine of the Lutheran Church and yet belong to a false teaching church; secondly, the unionist formula of distribution and the use of the unionist Agenda must now also be stopped; thirdly, the so-called united hymnal must be got rid of as soon as possible; fourthly, when distributing Holy Communion, one should refrain from inviting members of other fellowships to enjoy it (which on festive occasions was often done from the altar by the preacher); fifthly, announcement for Holy Communion should be introduced in the congregations; sixthly, the pastors of the Ohio Synod should consider that the call they have received through the congregation is a divine one, it follows that 1) the preacher should spend his whole life in the service of the congregation, that is, he should not be hired or hired out, thus becoming a servant of man, 2) the congregation should also listen to its appointed shepherd throughout his life, provided that he faithfully fulfills his ministry in doctrine and life. The carelessness with which pastors leave their congregations for the sake of external benefit should also cease. “This abominable and unworthy renting and hiring on the part of the congregations and the no less disgraceful Lutheran pastors who let themselves be rented or hired is one of the worst stains of shame on most congregations and synodical constitutions of this land,” exclaims Dr. Sihler and says, after he has recommended to the Ohio pastors the conscientious examination of the candidates and the establishment of the so necessary congregational schools, it would be advisable for them to draft a new synodical constitution. He concludes with the heartfelt wish that the confessional-practical reform of the entire previous ecclesiastical system, in keeping with the commitment to the symbols, may soon and thoroughly take place. One sees from this essay that Sihler, who at that time was already Vice President of the Missouri Synod, still bore a cordial love for his old Ohio colleagues. [↑] The

Ohioans, however, paid little heed to this well-meant advice; rather, in the *Der Lutheraner* numbers of the following month, November 1848 [[vol. 5, p. 45 ff., “Die Generalsynode und der Lutheran Standard.”](#)], one can read that the *Lutheran Standard* contains an article in which the leaders of the Ohio Synod give ten reasons why it is desirable for the Ohio Synod to join the General Synod. The Ohio body did not seem to understand that such a union would approve of the false doctrines of the General Synod such as its Calvinist sacramental doctrine, the rejection of actual absolution, and other unscriptural violations. Pastor Brohm therefore proclaims in *Der Lutheraner* that since the Ohio journal wanted to be a *Lutheran Standard*, we would have expected a completely different response to the General Synod's proposals for unification, and the editor of *Der Lutheraner* [[Brohm](#)] finally asks how the recent commitment of Ohio to all symbolic books can be harmonized with a unification with the General Synod? He reminds us of some important passages of the symbols, as well as of the first petition of the holy Lord's Prayer, together with the explanation of this petition, in the Smalcald Articles [[Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, § 42, from the German](#)]: “Paul commands, ... here stands God's command that everyone should beware and not be in agreement with those who teach unjust doctrines.” Furthermore, two important points from the [Formula of Concord](#) were brought out. — Although the formal connection to the General Synod was not made at that time, the Ohio pastors did not like their words to be taken in the above-mentioned manner, and it often seemed as if there was no inclination to take the pledge to the symbols seriously in practice. As it was well proven to them that the licensing of pastors system, which was customary with them, militates against the symbols, as for example [Article XIV of the Augsburg Confession](#), they nevertheless continued to adhere to it for many years. They wanted to let the prospective preachers go through degrees before they could be ordained. — Since some preachers proved to be unfit to do so, the Ohio Synod wanted to withhold ordination for a considerable time also from such as had been regularly called by a congregation.

The Missouri Synod, on the other hand, advises that the candidates should be all the more thoroughly examined and researched in their beliefs and moral standpoint. Licenses, however, are something non-Lutheran, for they speak 1) against the apostolic and ecclesiastical practice, which knows only about ordination; 2) presuppose a distrust of the attitude of the licentiates; where this would be justified, the office should not be committed to them at all; 3) presuppose an improper difference between the ordained and the licentiate; 4) prevent a firm, cheerful conscience of office in the licentiate, since he is unable to discover in the license any confirmation of his call.

[↑] Such a licenced pastor [or Licentiate] not only became a hybrid between a candidate and an ordained person, he was also considered, along with his official acts, to be a creature of the Synod that had licenced him, as if the truth of the Gospel and the nature of the sacrament (the validity of Baptism and the Holy Communion) were dependent on a synodical decision. Since there were also cases in which candidates continued to hold office even after the year for which they had been licensed had expired, an Ohio conference convened in Columbus once took the liberty of passing the following resolution: “Resolved, that all *Actus Ministeriales* (all official acts, as baptism, administration of the Holy Communion, etc.) of Wilhelm N. and Konrad M. and all others who have the same relationship with the Church are invalid in the opinion of this conference.” Although the Ohio pastors want to be zealous for the glory of Christ and His Church with this resolution, which they published in the *Lutheran Standard* under January 6, 1847 [*sic*, February 9], this resolution contains, as *Der Lutheraner* testifies loudly [Vol. 3, 1846-47 No. 12, February 9, 1847, p. 69 f., “The Columbus Conference”], a manifest desecration of the divine name, the Gospel, and the holy foundations of God. For such conference members hereby declare that as soon as our authority has expired, then the right seal (which we have to give) is missing, then God's Word is invalid, God's institution is nothing, God's promise is in vain! Pastor Walther proves that even the

Papists do not have such a despicable doctrine and, on the other hand, draws on Luther's writing of the 1533 “The Private Mass and the Consecration of the Priests” [[AE 38, 139-214](#)], “neither priests nor Christians, not even the holy Christian Church itself can perform any sacrament.” So Luther. When Walther himself asks: does the Columbus Conference not know that there is a huge difference between *rectum* and *ratum*, i.e. between legitimacy and validity, then Ohio’s theology is being asked to do too much. But he is right to ask whether they do not know Augustine's saying: “The Word comes to the element, and so it becomes a sacrament? According to his genuinely evangelical way, Walther continues: “Has not the Conference also thought how terribly it would offend and confuse consciences by such a decision, for who can be certain of his baptism, his communion, if that Conference decision were true?”

In June 1850, Dr. Sihler had arrived in New Bremen as a guest at the West-Ohio Synod, because he wanted to make it clear to the Ohio Synod, together with his brother in office Pastor Heid, that abuses were taking place in their ecclesiastical practices that were in direct contradiction to the publicly accepted Lutheran Confessions; in particular, it concerned the Missourian pastors to protest against the exception of a preacher named Gockelen, who had crept in from Pennsylvania and who was bringing a bunch of rude people with the holy sacrament, although they had left their Pastor Heid because he wanted to have a friendly pastoral conversation with these people before the Lord's Supper. But they had rejected him, although he wanted to visit them in their homes. Meanwhile, however, the decisive negotiation with Gockelen and his acceptance into the Ohio Synod took place in the so-called Ministerium (the closed meeting of pastors), so Pastor Heid was not allowed to do so, although he had communicated his protest in detail to the Ohio Synod president. At the same time, an Ohio pastor awakened to the truth asked his

Synod how he should conduct himself towards his United congregation? The answer was that he should behave as a Lutheran pastor and that no more united (mixed) congregations should be formed in the future. But this pastor was not told “how” he should behave as a Lutheran pastor, how he should help the Reformed and United people to recognize and break down their false standpoint. When Dr. Sihler pointed this out, this interference was interpreted by him as immodesty. Sihler sent a memoir from the assembly of the West Ohio Synod to [Der Lutheraner, Vol. 7, No. 14](#), *) in which he finally reproached the Ohio Synod

*) A certain Ohio Pastor [Spengler](#) had written to Pastor Heid concerning another congregation: “Forcing people to accept their previous pastor (a Missourian) again is not what is done in America”, (an expression taken from the English language). The pain for the souls, which are strengthened in their impenitence by such practice, then gives Dr. Sihler the following fervent words to write, which give a faithful picture of the carelessness with which such American businessmen administer their preaching ministry: “What can one respond to such words, which measure the Word and ordinance of God by American disorder, instead of measuring this disorder by the Word of God? Where is the command of Christ to act thus in such a case? Matt. 7:5. This however will do – and in this loving surrender to American taste the Ohio Synod exercises itself more than a little together with her like-minded sister synods – this will do, to make a hired preacher, baptiser, confirmer, communion dispenser, marriage performer and funeral orator; but this will not do, to take an interest in the particular spiritual need of individuals as a father in Christ, to rebuke, to comfort, and to admonish; this will do, to confirm people who, although they are not feeble-minded, have nevertheless not learned the ten commandments and the creed, and are admitted to the Lord's Supper although incapable of self examination; however it will not do to teach also the weak the one thing needful; this will do, to accept a large number of congregations, and every four weeks preach to them according to American taste a loose mixture of Law and Gospel, (according to the proverb: Wash my hide, but don't get it wet), to conduct no instruction of children, and then quickly to ride home; this however will not do, to minister to one or at most two congregations thoroughly and painstakingly, without fear of men and care for one's own belly to rebuke also the pet sins of Americans, and to comfort with the Gospel only such as hunger and thirst after

for using the Lutheran Confessions only as a figurehead, behind which it continued to pursue its loose, frivolous course, and let the poor congregations degenerate and spoil more and more. In No. 20 of the same year, the reader finds a parallel essay in which Pastor Lehmann, who had now become professor of the Columbus seminary, presents Dr. Sihler with a flood of abusive words, personal failures and gross abuse, that it is not true that the Ohio Synod accepts such preachers who just speak out too unionistically (as Gockelen had done), that no advice from Dr. Sihler was sought, also no defense or praise in its relationship to the General Synod (with reference to the article mentioned above), that the members of the Ohio Synod resist hierarchical despotism, and Missourian auricular confession (this is what the confessional was called). Sihler, he stated, could only tear down, etc. Dr. Sihler answered to the right of Lehmann's printed essay, point by point, stating the facts, and kindly asks Prof. Lehmann to come to Fort Wayne during the holiday season, to see the seminary, the congregational meetings, etc. with his own eyes, so that he would find there neither hierarchical despotism nor democratic arbitrariness, but a harmonious cooperation of teachers and listeners on the basis of the divine Word. In regard to the practice of the Ohio Synod, however, names and

righteousness. This **will do**, to neglect the poor children, and to leave them wholly to the district schools, and thereafter also to conclude confirmation instruction as quickly as possible. But this **will not do**, by means of friendly instruction and admonition of parents to institute **parish** schools, and to instruct the children themselves from little on in the Word of God, in Bible History and Catechism, and to raise them as the nursery and hope of the church; this **will do**, to let oneself be hired temporarily by congregations, and thus to be hired preachers, and hired servants; but this **will not do**, to secure a regular call, and as servants of God and ministers of Christ to rebuke, to threaten, to admonish, and to practice the church discipline ordained by the Lord all the way to excommunication.”

evidence are at his service, which he, out of prudence, still withholds. By the way, Dr. Sihler asks Prof. Lehmann there to name pastors of his association who are not hired preachers and have a "regular call", who have regular parish schooling and have the church discipline commanded by Christ, and thus do not conduct their ministry according to American taste, but according to God's order. — Towards the end Dr. Sihler exclaims: "If only some willingness on the part of the Synod and my fellow witnesses had met our first request, perhaps everything would have been different." —

We break off now and reserve the right to present the further history of the Ohio Synod and its relationship to the Missouri Synod in a later chapter. [[Chapter XI](#)]

[\[↑\]](#) **The withdrawal of the Franconian Lutherans from the Michigan Synod.**

One year after Dr. Sihler and his fellow witnesses had resigned from the Ohio Synod, on June 25, 1846, the day of the delivery of the Augsburg Confession [[June 25](#)], four pastors sent by Pastor Loehe to serve the local Lutheran Church signed a document, W. Hattstaedt, A. Craemer, Fr. Lochner and J. Trautmann, signed a document, resigning from the Michigan Synod. Since this Synod was originally formed by congregations whose members were gathered by Lutherans who had immigrated from Germany, it was hoped that better elements were found in it than in the Ohio Synod. Pastor Schmidt in Ann Arbor was the founder of the synod, which he called the Missions Synod, while he and the young helpers he trained in a short time, focused his attention on the mission among the Indians of Michigan. Later this synod called itself the German-Lutheran Synod of Michigan. Pastor Loehe had corresponded with Pastor Schmidt, who promised that in this synod he would commit himself to all the symbolic books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Pastor Hattstädt was the first of the Loehe emissaries who entered this synod, and since Pastor Schmidt declared that the Indian mission should also be carried out from the Lutheran Church point of view, it was also possible, as mentioned above, to meet Pastor A. Craemer, who had left Franconia with a small German Lutheran missionary congregation, at the river Cass in Saginaw Co, Michigan, to work united with the missionaries from Ann Arbor among the pagan Indians. The Franconian Lutherans also supported this mission with donations, so that a mission farm could be acquired there. In the meantime, a pupil of the Basel Mission Institute, Pastor Dumser, who had been ordained in his old homeland but had not been committed to the symbols of the Lutheran Church, had arrived for this station. He declared at the synod that a complete commitment to our symbolic books was a moral constraint for him. It also turned out that the so-called Lutheran Synod of Michigan had obviously served several mixed congregations as such with Word and sacrament. Against these abuses a unanimous protest was immediately lodged by the four above-mentioned pastors, in which was requested the exclusion of the un-Lutheran missionary Dumser and the cleansing of the synod due to the unchurchly ministry to mixed congregations. First a letter was sent to the then president of the synod, and then the motion was renewed in a public synod meeting because of the unlutheran missionary Mr. Dumser. Meanwhile the mission committee, even before this application had been settled, had already cast its vote to confirm Pastor Dumser in his office, even though he himself repeatedly and publicly declared that he would not allow himself to be committed to the Lutheran symbols without reservations. Since finally also approval of Reformed customs at Holy Communion were condoned and the synod wanted to transplant the “United-Evangelical” stance of the Basel Missions House to the Synod of Michigan, the above-mentioned resignation declaration came about, in which the

undersigned pastors assert that they have come to America from their homeland to serve the Lutheran Church and Mission and it alone, and only in response to the statement that the Synod of Michigan is a purely Lutheran Synod did they join this Synod. But now they had to leave with deep sorrow at the un-Lutheran position which the Synod, despite all the counter-testimonies which they (the Lutheran preachers) had given; such a position was a very dangerous one, especially in the ecclesiastical circumstances of this country, because determination and firmness in doctrine and practice were highly necessary for a fruitful work. — [↑]

The above-mentioned four Lutheran preachers withdrew from the Michigan Synod, but the Synod did not benefit from this; it was necessary to learn in Michigan that many souls die spiritually because of laxity in doctrine and life, and that this works into the hands of the sects, especially the Methodists. Since Pastor Schmidt, who was in Ann Arbor, was considered a friend of the pious Pietists, many Christians from Württemberg in particular, who had belonged to the so-called "ecclesial communities" there, followed him. Meanwhile, these newly immigrated congregations under the leadership of the Basel pupils, who served them, did not come to the realization of their ecclesiastical rights and duties. One who grew up there and was subsequently trained theologically in a Missouriian seminary judges from those conditions: "One heard there a lot of pious talk there; this also took the place of doctrine in confirmation instruction." — Prayer from the heart, certain fruits of godliness, were promoted even before the foundation of faith was laid in the heart. It was right to say that conversion was necessary, but they wanted to be assured of conversion through all kinds of spiritual skills and experiences, and they mixed sanctification and justification with it. How can the poor sinner be assured of his justification when he has heard the Word of absolution and the word of salvation? How can the poor sinner be assured of his justification if he disregards the word of absolution and the holy sacrament? What good is all the talk of

grace, when this grace is conditioned by the works of man? The pastors of this Michigan Synod brought with them already from Germany the erroneous opinion that, especially in a mission field, the confessional difference between the existing churches must be dropped. When the Lutherans wanted to preserve the truth revealed in Word and sacraments according to the command: "Keep that which is committed to thy trust," [1 Tim 6:20], they were told: "You want to quarrel about words!" But while one did not want to have Lutherans who praise the salvation that came through Christ and leave the glory to God alone, who through the power of the Word, which is spirit and life, works the faith in the hearts of those who hear the Word, the Methodists in Michigan, also in Ann Arbor, where Pastor Schmidt stood for 40 years, were to find the field open to their activities. While in Perry County, Missouri, all where souls are led to the right pasture, no German Methodist community has been able to arise until this day, in Michigan, on the other hand, the Albright Brethren [Albrechtbrüder, Albright's People, [Jacob Albrecht](#)] [[pic](#)] and the Episcopal Methodists became so powerful that they found their way from there to Germany, especially to Wuerttemberg. The inner kinship between these and the United Evangelicals, who put their "spiritual life" in the place of the faith based on the Word, is evident. On both sides one wants to see conversion itself in what is only the fruit and consequence of faith and to place Christianity in a coarser or finer works righteousness. Those Albright's People also call themselves the Evangelicals (Evangelical Brethren) [or [Evangelical Association](#)], but they should rather, as Dr. Walther says, be called the legalists, because they want to base the consolation that the sinner, who has been crushed by the law, can obtain through faith in God's grace given in the Gospel alone, on emotional impressions, heartfelt sorrows, prayer exercises, wrestling, fighting and seeking sanctification. Instead of right conversion, this rather causes excitement, and in the fire of temptation such stubble is soon consumed. The growing up

young people fall the more easily into the rough world, and among the elderly, miserliness becomes the prevailing sin.

[↑] [The fight against the Methodists.](#)

Especially the first years of *Der Lutheraner* show that the founders of the Missouri Synod had to fight [Methodists](#), [Baptists](#) and similar enthusiasts [*Schwarmgeister*]. Especially the first of them acted as the ruling church in North America at that time. The main Methodist organ, *The Apologist* [*Der Christliche Apologete*] published in Cincinnati, attacked the Lutherans as literalists, who made the main thing out of several secondary doctrines (namely of baptism and the Lord's Supper) and the celebration of the holy sacrament in the manner of the Papists into a mere work performed (*opus operatum*), regardless of whether it was received with or without faith. On the other hand, [Mr.\[Wilhelm\] Nast](#), the editor of *The Apologist* in *Der Lutheraner*, is proved that [they](#), the Methodists, are the ones who despise God's Word and setup their own work, that they do not accept Holy Baptism as an act of the Triune God, and thereby weaken the Gospel and raise up their own legalistic schmeat, so that they align their feelings of repentance and faith as a kind of contributory merit, severely damage the article of justification, and thereby rob many thousands of souls of the most glorious and solid comfort of grace!

The [second volume of Der Lutheraner](#) contains a series of ongoing articles under the heading "[Holy Absolution rescued from the blasphemies of the Methodists.](#)" There Dr. Walther first expresses his horror at the fact that *The Apologist* did not shy away from calling absolution "[one of the devil's main tricks](#)", and of the granting of absolution in the name of the Triune God, and writes that those who take comfort in absolution are warned that "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man,... whose heart departeth from the Lord!" [Jer. 17:5] Afterwards Walther proves that absolution is based on God's clear Word, that it was exercised by the prophets and apostles and in

the best times of the Church, and that it is by no means a remnant of the Papacy. After all the objections of *The Apologist* had been refuted, Mr. Näst responded to this essay as follows: “With people who, instead of letting their reason be enlightened by the Holy Spirit, do not want to use it at all, like the so-called Old Lutherans, every argument is in vain. Their pope is the dead letter and their faith is a blind delusion of man, not a conviction brought about by the Holy Spirit. We can do nothing but pray that God may open their eyes, that they may be converted from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to the living God.” Whereupon Dr. Walther again in No. 25 Vol. 2 of *Der Lutheraner* replies [[Vol. II, No. 25 "Methodism", p. 100](#)]: “Hereupon we have only this to explain that by God's grace we will never stop recognizing ‘the letter’ [*Buchstaben*] of God's Word for our pope, under His right sceptre (Ps. 45:7) it is better to live than under the crooked staff of a Methodist Pope like Mr. Nast, who, from a good Roman background, terribly judges and condemns an entire church fellowship, and who strips off all the members of the same faith, that is, grace and salvation, and declares that they are covered with hellish darkness and handed over to the devil, and that they do not even use their reason, that is, they have sunk completely into cattle.”

In 1847, *Der Lutheraner* had a battle with *The Apologist* about Holy Communion, on which occasion a very learned Methodist in *The Apologist* had the mishap of trying to teach the Lutherans the doctrine of **contransubstantiation** (!) [[instead of transubstantiation](#)]. After also Dr. Nast had printed something about Holy Communion in *The Apologist*, he boastfully challenged Prof. Walther to print this Methodist gibberish in *Der Lutheraner*, for which then Walther's refutation, which was to take just as much space, would also appear in *The Apologist*. As can even be seen from the words accompanying this challenge, Dr. Nast was filled with the sweet

hope that Prof. Walther would not have the heart to present such balderdash to *Der Lutheraner* readers, and therefore he exclaimed at the close of his challenge: “Pastor Walther will probably show his shame and nakedness on this occasion. But unfortunately! The readers of *Der Lutheraner* will remain in the fog, whatever *The Apologist* writes etc.”. — But what does Walther do? Certainly not to the joy of Nast, he accepts the challenge “with great joy” in [the number of *Der Lutheraner* of August 10, 1847](#), and in *Der Lutheraner* publishes [”A Contemplation of Mr. Nast on Holy Communion.” \[p. 21\]](#), writes about it under the title: “Why are the words of institution: ‘This is my body; this is my blood’ a thorough refutation of the Methodist doctrine of the Lord's Supper” (in [Der Lutheraner, volume IV \[p. 27\]](#));) and now waits for the publication of this refutation in *The Apologist*. There finally follows Nast's equally dishonorable as well as cowardly explanation that he does not want to include Walther's refutation in his paper. Walther wrote at the time about this broken promise, but genuinely Methodist prank: “We lose nothing in the process but the last vestige of our confidence in the honesty and uprightness of the Methodist leaders. Mr. Nast could not have explained more clearly in public that he, against his will, was convinced of the good cause of the Lutheran doctrine in the matter of the Holy Communion, and beaten out of the field in the most shameful way with his Methodist “chatter”, had to humbly stretch out his arms. Mr. Nast, by the way, did not only begin his unfortunate retreat with insult and disgrace, but also, like all cowards who take to their heels, with insults and disgrace. For he throws with him: ‘Lutheran scholasticism, Jesuitism, Roman-Lutheran scribes, papistical and Jewish ministerial brethren, endless torrent of words’ and with similar outpourings of an irritated bile around him. According to our small judgment, it would have been wiser if Mr. Nast had left quietly and not grumbled and scolded so much, for in doing so he

betrayed all the more the desperate mood into which the reproach of truth had put him.” This exposure had at least such an effect that Mr. Nast, for the sake of shame before men, included a part of Walther's essay in *The Apologist*, but at the same time he had a spiteful article published in the St. Louis *German Tribune* [*Die Deutsche Tribuene*], in which he accused Prof. Walther of wanting to make his readers believe that he (Nast) had refused to include any reply in his paper, that Walther was therefore “a double deceiver” who dealt with “palpable and knowledgeable untruths and impudent lies.” The very next day, however, the following was read in the *Tribune*: “Dr. Nast bases the legitimacy of his earlier refusal to include even a little of our essay in *The Apologist* on the fact that he had agreed, if we were to write another essay, to give it space in his paper. However, every person of sound mind understands that Mr. Nast is trying to take advantage of us with this explanation, but was wisely pulling himself out of the noose. For Mr. Nast could well have imagined that we would not quickly work out another essay at his request and thus make ourselves ridiculous in front of our readers. — However Mr. Nast may twist and turn, the first unconditional refusal to accept even a single letter from our essay, after we, in good faith in Mr. Nast's word and German honesty, had completely and without alteration published his essay in our paper, is and remains an infamous, dishonourable way of dealing.” F. Walther, editor of *Der Lutheraner* (See [Der Lutheraner vol. IV p. 88](#); [[“Herrn Dr. Nast betreffend.”](#)].) — — With that this matter was over.

A booklet written by Dr. [W. Sihler](#) proved to be particularly helpful against the seduction to modern Methodism: [Conversations between two Lutherans about Methodism](#) [[WorldCat](#)]. This booklet was written after Dr. Sihler made personal acquaintance with a Methodist preacher named

Mueller; the same has not only appeared in repeated editions in the Lutheran Concordia Publishing House in St. Louis, but has also been translated into several languages. Dr. Sihler writes there, among other things, [p. 34](#): “What in individual cases was the free working of the Spirit of God in Wesley's and Whitefield's time, their weak descendants now seek to make into a general form and to raise it to the right way and manner.” The pressing and driving of their preachers is as if man could repent of his own will and come forward as repentant in a certain place, as if the Holy Spirit was bound to a certain place, time and manner. (See also Pastor F. Wyneken's experiences regarding the Methodists in [Chapter IV](#)).

Although 40 years ago the Methodist leaders looked down on these “Old Lutherans” and on the whole Lutheran Church with contempt, now, however, due to the strong flourishing of the pure Lutheran Church, which refused to deal with the Methodists in a brotherly way, the propaganda of the Methodist circuit riders is so strongly controlled by it here, that they themselves must complain and admit that their missionary work is mostly at a standstill among the Germans here.

VI. [^](#)

The German Evangelical Lutheran Synod Of Missouri, Ohio, And Other States constitutes itself and Raises its Banner in the name of God.

[\[Der Lutheraner \(DL\) begins its run \(148\); Pastors read, hand out DL \(DL\) \(149\); Walther's “Foreword” to vol. 3 of DL: “Lutheran Zion”, \(152\); Constitution drawn up \(154\); Loehe praises, criticizes \(154\); Constitution details \(156\); Opening synod meeting \(158\); 2nd Convention \(161\); Pastor Brauer, Addison Teacher's Seminary \(165\); Third synod convention, missions \(1849\) \(166\); Educational institutions, \(168\); Walther elected professor, St. Louis sem. building begins, \(169\); Ft. Wayne practical seminary \(172\); Addison Teachers' Seminary \(175\)\]](#) **A look at the synod's educational institutions, charitable institutions, Negro, Jewish and Emigrant missions.**

[\[↑\]](#) Any church is a fellowship of those who have one doctrine and religion with one another. In particular, the Lutheran Church, which holds the right unified faith and therefore constitutes the true visible church on earth, cannot possibly have two confessions or different conflicting doctrines

in its midst. Just as our Lutheran fathers declared at the time of the Reformation that although it was difficult for them to part with so many lands and so many people, they had to fulfill this duty according to divine command. So it was to be the case for the Lutheran pastors who had come to America at the beginning of the 1840s to serve the immigrant fellow believers with the pure preaching of the Gospel. They recognized with pain that they had fallen into a church association in which they did not find what they were looking for, because in none of the synods existing at that time was Lutheranism a spiritual power that would have shaped and determined church practice. The synod negotiations were therefore mostly of a business nature, in the traditional manner. In practice, one and the same preacher often considered it *expedient* (useful in his own interest) to follow a double practice, depending on the so-called mixed congregations he had taken over. Lutheran pastors who were serious about the Word of God in word and deed could not help but separate themselves from those who taught from a divided heart, for what is divided in faith and confession is separate. But they were soon to learn that it is also said: Like-minded people will find one another, for what God wills, comes to pass! The truth should not only divide but also unite. — Even for those synods which had to be left by the Lutheran pastors mentioned above, their leaving was such a serious, actual testimony that the peace of the cemetery, which until then had ruled in the Ohio Synod, for example, was disturbed. There, too, they began to draw more and more on the confessional writings, they no longer wanted to let anyone with his or her views be granted undisturbed, and the division of Lutherans loyal to their Confessions, who immediately convened for their own synod, aroused a salutary shame in some who had remained behind. — After also those Lutheran preachers, who had been members of the Michigan Synod

until then had left it, and the Bavarian Lutherans already were in communication with the Saxon preachers in Missouri, Pastor Loehe exclaims in his messages: “But to what a small number the Lutheran Church of North America is now melting together!” But this objection was not correct. When forty or fifty oaks stand in a large pine or spruce forest, they disappear from view more easily than when they stand frankly and freely outside the spruce forest: If the spruce forest became an oak forest by having forty oaks scattered about within it, that would be a gain. But since this is not the case, the majesty of the oaks is recognized much more when they stand together separately. To speak without a picture: our friends become stronger by departing from those with whom they cannot agree on the basis of the divine Word!

As once the Gideonites called all those to return who were despondent (Judges 7:3), and in the end formed only a small group of three hundred, because the others were not capable of fighting, so by God's will not only the Saxon Lutherans had to leave the corrupt state church and take up the walking staff, also the determined Lutherans within the old synods steeped in rationalist leaven had to leave and form a small group so that they could stand up for the truth with a clear voice as Christ's fighters. [↑] But the trumpet voice, which sounded so clearly that many sincere hearts rejoiced but others were frightened, was the testimony of *Der Lutheraner*. Its motto to this day is: “God's Word and Luther's doctrine pure shall to eternity endure”. The first occasion for the publication of this periodical was the following: Pastor F. Walther was struck by a serious illness in St. Louis in the middle of 1844. When it seemed that he would recover again, he asked God the Lord that when he would rise again He would also give him the strength and means to write and publish at least four issues of such a paper

in which he could put the Lutheran Church in the true light. It grieved him during this illness that the Lutherans were particularly vilified by the Baptists and Methodists. — The publication *Der Lutheraner* appeared before the public for the first time [on 1 September 1844](#). [NB: This background of *Der Lutheraner* beginning is quoted by F. Pieper on the paper's 75th anniversary in *Lehre und Wehre* vol. 66 (1920), p. 38-39] In the first four issues Pastor Walther deals with the doctrine of the church. — In later years Pastor F. Wyneken still used to tell about the joy with which he, at that time still living in Fort Wayne, welcomed the appearance of the first issue of *Der Lutheraner*. In the same year, Pastor A. Ernst, while visiting Pastor Wyneken, found this church paper and wrote about it to Pastor Loehe: "From Pastor Walther (the editor) is without doubt to be expected something very excellent." The first among the Saxon pastors to correspond with Pastor Loehe was Pastor Gruber, who wanted to obtain a pastor for the Franconians settled near [Paitzdorf, Missouri](#), through his help. "I am one of the pastors," it says in this letter, "who once hung on the world-famous Stephan. But the faithful, merciful and gracious God was patient with us and purified us from all the erroneous principles adopted under Stephan through His Holy Word. He honored me anew to entrust me with the ministry of reconciliation. He needs us here in America, after having purified us well, to plant the banner of truth and especially to gather the lost sheep of the Lutheran Church. In this way, He has helped us so far that through our dear ministerial brother Walther in St. Louis we were able to publish a periodical *Der Lutheraner* for the service of all who seek and possess the truth.

[↑] After Pastors Sihler, Ernst, Selle and Saupert, among others, left the Ohio Synod, and Pastors A. Craemer, F. Lochner, Hattstedt and Trautmann left the Michigan Synod, they distributed *Der Lutheraner* also in their congregations, which also gave rise to the desire in these congregations to establish a closer relationship with the Saxon Lutherans in Missouri. Pastor Loehe

had already asked the pastor Hattstedt to travel to St. Louis, but he was prevented from doing so by illness. "In the spring of 1846, however," Dr. Sihler reports, "our three, Pastor A. Ernst, Lochner and I, set off for St. Louis, where Pastor Walther had invited the Saxon brothers pastors, Pastors Loeber, Keyl, Gruber, Fürbringer and Schieferdecker, to a conference. Dr. Sihler further reports what an important impression Pastor Walther had made on them. When the draft of the basic outlines for a orthodox congregational association was discussed, Walther had animated and shaped the whole thing by laying down the pure Lutheran doctrine of the nature of the church, the public teaching office of the church, the church government and church order on each point. The previous and present synods were caught up in a certain semi-darkness in these matters. They had not become so at home in the Confessions in such a way that they knew what they were, what they should do and were to do. Their constitutions did not aim at a situation where the Lutheran faith was supposed to hold the congregation together and connect it with each other, where the synod itself was only an advisory body to the individual congregations, where the synod itself was formed by the representatives of the congregations, was dependent on them, and the synod officials in turn were dependent on the synod. For this reason, the synods were at times dictatorial and wanted to play the role of legislator at the synod, as if the synod had the congregations at its feet, as if it were possible to introduce monetary restrictions, confessional books and the like by a single resolution. It often happened that the pastors, as soon as they returned home from the Synod, recognized the difficulty in carrying out what had been decided — they found it expedient to let Mr. everyman (*omnes*) freely do what he would, that is, to follow the crowd.

The conference gathered in St. Louis, which drafted the first draft for the organization of the Missouri Synod, was well aware that it is no more appropriate for a Lutheran body

to put a yoke on the necks of its disciples, i.e., by means of certain regulations to establish control or a kind of supreme church government than that famous convention at Jerusalem which, according to Acts 15 , assembled under the leadership of the apostles. Rather it is stated that, under what the purpose of the Synod is to be, the rights and duties of the congregations and pastors should be protected. It is precisely the fact that these previous synods wanted to operate and rule through an external authority that caused their reputation to decline all the more, because enlightened Christians do not want to have any other rule apart from and in addition to their Lord and Master, and despite all other unfamiliarity in spiritual matters, one can sense the kinship with the Roman hierarchy as soon as a synod, called Evangelical-Lutheran, wants to establish its own order or even intervene in the right of appointment of the congregation and rule in the manner of a state-church consistory. No true unity is achieved even by such a carnal rule. The Roman Church itself is an example of this. Although blind obedience to the Pope forms the external bond, so many parties are found in her as monastic orders and other associations which hinder each other. The hierarchical synods in North America experience the same thing. Where, instead of building on the one cornerstone of Christianity, the framework of the constitutions and synodical ordinances is taken as a basis, there rather the vain, secular party effort prevails than the deep inner unity of the Spirit, which is built on the common faith and doctrine. Instead of being concerned with the spiritual edification of the Kingdom of God, to which only truly believing souls belong, carnal ambition is still active and alive in many synods in this country today, each synod wanting to enlarge its own field, and just like the friars in the Papacy, the Franciscans and the Dominicans, and again the Jesuits, want to outdo each other in rank and envy each other, but they all want to be good Catholics,

so most synods in America today still stand side by side, only agreeing that they all pretend to be good Lutherans. It is astonishing that in the midst of the sectarian confusion and the swarm of synods that still buzzes about the souls of men today, such a body could be formed which knows no other task than to call back the straying Lutherans to the old saving Gospel and to gather the banner of the never-aging Lutheran Confessions. — [[Who would deny the “sectarian confusion and the swarm of synods” today?](#)]

The new insight and clarity in the doctrinal articles necessary to form a truly Lutheran synod filled the above-mentioned pastors, who for the first time met the Saxon Lutherans personally, with great joy. “Even then,” Dr. Sihler reports, “a glimmer of hope fell into my heart, that from the testimony of these brothers, in particular Walther, even if it was like a mustard seed, a tree could grow, which would also extend to the East and under whose shade the neglected Lutheran Church would take on a healthy shape, as it has already partly happened through God’s grace and blessing.” [[↑](#)] Also *Der Lutheraner* shows a brave courage of faith in the [Foreword to its third year in September of the same year \[1846- Pastor Baseley’s excellent translation!\]](#). Pastor Walther exclaims there that although the trust in his own powers had not grown in him, this made him all the more joyful that the Lord Himself obviously promoted the cause which *Der Lutheraner* in part was serving. *) In the following he is pleased that

————— [[Effect of *Der Lutheraner*!](#)]

*) *Der Lutheraner* has now reached a readership of 15,000 within the Missouri Synod in 1884, although seven smaller church publications serving local or individual district purposes have been established in the Missouri Synod area over the past ten years. Since the writer of these lines was asked during his last stay in Germany, how it is possible in our synod to arouse such a lively interest in a church [doctrinal paper](#), while in Germany one wins many readers only for religious entertainment publications, so the following about *Der Lutheraner* may be quoted from the [Evang.-Lutherische Blätter](#), which appeared in New Orleans: “Whoever stands in the true faith, and now

the interest in the pure doctrine, which had been completely eradicated here in this country, had become alive again. "A great battle has broken out, which is becoming more general every day. Separations are taking place everywhere, but at the same time there is a determined desire among the orthodox believers for the most intimate union. We are obviously at the gates of the most important and, we hope to God, most salutary decision for our Church. — Those who are now fighting for the restoration of the Lutheran Church in its original form are, of course, still like a drop in the bucket in comparison with those who are fighting them. But no matter how few of them there are, no matter how much mockery and scorn is used to persecute their fellowship, no matter how much suspicion is cast on them by the people, and no matter how they are presented to the people against their own better knowledge and conscience as a new sect, — — — we take comfort! Let the spirit of lies still be so unbending: the Lord has set out to restore his Church; neither quantity, nor power, nor cunning, after lies and slander, will stop Him; He will carry out His work with almighty power. The truth will triumph and the enemies of the truth will be brought to shame. Amen!" Pastor Walther recognized so clearly

knows that with him hundreds and hundreds of congregations confess the same faith, defend the same truth, bear the same sufferings and abuses for the sake of Christ, experience the same joys of the victory of the Gospel, should he not be inspired by the desire to receive news from this whole circle of his fellow Christians? Should he not want to read about the wars that the Church of God must wage on earth? Of the victories which it achieves with the sword of the Spirit in Christ's power and of the blessing which God pours down upon it? Should he not burn with the desire to be led ever deeper into pure doctrine? Shouldn't he want to help for the various needs of the Kingdom of God, preacher and teacher seminars, higher educational institutions, missions among scattered brethren, among Negroes, Jews, Gentiles, care of immigrants, feeding the sick, widows and orphans, distribution of Bibles, edification books, etc.? *Der Lutheraner* brings reports about all this. Everyone who follows our advice and reads *Der Lutheraner* will thank us for eternity."

that the time of visitation had come, although he had seen such few pastors at the conference before him. The time had come and the hour had come that Lutheran Zion [not Forster's "Zion"] should be built in this western part of the world in this 19th century. The servants of God wanted it to be built (Ps. 102:14-15). However because anyone who wants to build a tower must first sit down and carefully estimate the total cost, lest people should say: he started something and is not able to finish it (Luke 14), Pastors Sihler, A. Ernst and Fr. Lochner agreed with the Saxon brethren before their departure to meet again in Fort Wayne in the summer of that same year 1846, to which other like-minded pastors who had not been able to come to St. Louis were also invited. An even more numerous conference was held in Dr. Sihler's home in July of that year. [↑] From St. Louis and the surrounding area, Pastors Loeber, Walther, Kehl, and Brohm had arrived in Fort Wayne. The draft of a Lutheran synodical constitution was gone through anew and brought to a conclusion so far that it was published in *Der Lutheraner* (see No. 1, Volume III) and as a pamphlet for distribution among the congregations. [↑] Pastor Loehe, in Bavaria, also published this draft, with several comments, and was pleased to have his emissaries in touch with the Saxon pastors. There are only a few criticisms that he made, insofar as the requirements considered necessary to pass an examination or colloquium seem too difficult to him according to this synodical constitution (he considered investigation of the spiritual disposition is considered the most important thing for those who want to pass a colloquium). Moreover, it can be seen from his communications that Pastor Loehe also agreed at that time with the wise limitation that every synodical resolution can only then be binding for the individual congregation if the latter had voluntarily accepted and confirmed it by a formal congregational resolution. Since Pastor Löhe later on followed other principles when founding the opposition Iowa Synod

whereby the synodical president and the synodical assembly were given an authoritative governance over the individual pastors and congregations, and since furthermore such hierarchical synods, where they are able to do so, also here in this country armor themselves with the help of the secular authorities, *) so here is the answer to the reproach that was raised by the opponents of the Missouri Synod: What use is a synod if it does not have the power to give orders? Pastor Grabau dared, in a public pulpit, to predict that the Missouri Synod would be smashed into a thousand pieces within ten years! Meanwhile, more than 25 years have passed since that prophecy, and the Missouri Synod has grown inwardly and outwardly, while the politics of the Romanizing Lutherans will often be disgraced, as the example of the followers of Grabau shows. It is precisely because such synods presume to exercise authority, to impose certain sums of money on the congregations as contributions to synodical funds, and because such hierarchical pastors see their synod as a kind of life insurance policy and job placement company, that some congregations are made suspicious of everyone and every synod. Therefore, even at the first synodical assemblies held by the Missouri Synod, few congregations were willing to join the synod as such. — It follows from God's Word that a synod must never be an ecclesiastical authority with coercive power. For if

*) This is done when the particular synod persuades the individual congregations with all kinds of promises and contrary warnings to include in the purchase contract, which is legally drawn up, the condition that in the event of a split and also otherwise, only a congregation can retain possession and use of the church property in question which is under the jurisdiction of the specifically named particular synod. Those congregations which allowed themselves to be seduced into selling their Christian freedom in this way to domineering synods, by which they are often badly advised and provided with bad pastors, often had to lose all their church property, including the school buildings, if they wanted to regain their freedom.

in Gal. 5:1 and 2 Cor. 8:7 even the Apostle says: “I speak not by commandment, but ... to prove the sincerity of your love,” so much less a Synod, which is only human right, may have a commanding position. A so-called strong church government is not what the Missouri Lutherans are striving for; for a genuine Lutheran synod only wants to advise and serve the congregations and pastors who voluntarily join it, as far as they want to be advised and helped. But this service presupposes very important matters toward its goal, the preservation of the unity of the Spirit inwardly, which includes above all the preservation of pure doctrine, and the confession of faith for which the saints should also fight: An individual congregation will hardly think itself strong enough to fight such a battle, and however often it is without a pastor, it also needs special advice and support! This alone reveals the need for an association of congregations, a mutual handing out of spiritual goods, whereby the gifts God gives are of benefit to all and to ever wider circles. If there is only one Lord whom we serve and one faith which we confess, then a common zeal to spread the Word of God and to propagate it to children and children's children will also be active among the members of the faith; all who recognize each other as brethren will also exercise their spiritual priesthood through the voluntary standing and working together, for which the synodical fellowship helps. The apostolic congregations also held together intimately, and were maintained by the apostles who travelled back and forth in such fellowship and unity, which we now seek to achieve through the synodical institution as an appropriate means.

[↑] In Chapter 4, § 9 of the present Synodical Constitution it says therefore: “The Synod is only an advisory body with regard to the self-government of the individual congregations.” But just because the Missouri Synod protects and preserves the right and independence of every congregation, it would be fundamentally wrong to say that we must not join the Synod because there is no

command from God for it; for the organization of such a bona fide synod is the best means of maintaining unity in the Spirit. Hereafter the reader will understand what is meant by the following summary enumeration of some of the most important paragraphs of the Missouri Synod constitution.

Chapter 1 contains the reasons for the formation of a synodical association. These are 1) the model of the Apostolic Church. Acts 15:1-31; 2) The will of the Lord that the various gifts may be used for the common good. 1 Cor. 12:4-31; 3) United expansion of the kingdom of God and enabling and promoting of special churchly purposes. (Seminary, Agenda, hymnal, Book of Concord, textbooks, Bible distribution, etc.); 4) Preservation and promotion of the unity of the pure confession, Eph. 4:3-6, 1 Cor. 1:10 and common defence against separatistic and sectarian disorder, Rom. 16:17; 5) Appreciation and protection of the rights and duties of pastors and congregations. 6) Achieving the greatest possible uniformity in church government.

It follows from the purpose which this synodical association set itself in the above chapter that the connection to the synod is again conditioned by a firm confession. The conditions for joining the Missouri Synod and continuing fellowship with it are, according to Chapter 2, the following: 1) the confession of the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and life. 2) Acceptance of all the symbolic books of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church. 3) Renunciation of all unionism and syncretism. 4) exclusive use of pure doctrine in church and school books. 5) exclusive use of the German language in synodical meetings.

Since the supervision of the purity and unity of doctrine within the synodical district belongs primarily to the business of the Synod, doctrinal questions are always the most important subjects of deliberation at synodical conventions. This became apparent

even at the first conventions. It had been agreed at that Fort Wayne conference that the draft of the synodical constitution, which already contained the above paragraph, would be held over for one year so that pastors and congregations could examine it and thus consider their decision to join such a synod. Meanwhile, at the conclusion of that Fort Wayne conference, the Lutherans had departed in the joyful hope that they would soon come together in one ecclesial body which, with united forces, from the same foundation of the divine Word, with the same means of grace, and with the exclusion of any church politics, would build up the Lutheran Church ever more firmly and vigorously to the glory of God, and spread it ever more eagerly. [↑] The opening of the synod was scheduled for Jubilate Sunday [[May 25](#)] of the year 1847. Dr. Sihler briefly describes how difficult the journey to Chicago was for the delegates from Fort Wayne at that time, because impassable wet prairies prevented a straight path. In Chicago, where Pastor Selle was already a Lutheran congregation leader, the [German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and Other States](#) was to be constituted, as the printed synodical report shows, and it turned out that twelve pastors with sixteen congregations as voting members signed the above constitution; eleven pastors were present in addition to those who were present in an advisory capacity, some sent in their approval in writing. One member of the preparatory conference, Pastor Burger, of Willshire, Ohio, had been called to the heavenly church a month earlier. — On Jubilate Sunday, April 25, the arriving pastors and delegates gathered in the German Lutheran Church along with many members of the congregation for confession and absolution. Afterwards Pastor Loeber preached about the Gospel of that day John 16:16-23. This was followed by the celebration of Holy Communion. In the afternoon Dr. Sihler preached on Acts 2:42. In the evening the brethren gathered in the home of Pastor Selle, where the appointment for the first synodical meeting of the following day was made.

On Monday morning, April 26, 1847, the Synod was opened by Pastor A. Selle, who addressed the gathered brethren, explaining and setting forth to them the important purpose of this meeting. The first signing of the synodical Constitution was then made, first by those pastors and delegates who had participated in the drafting of the Constitution. Since some congregations, who were not yet sufficiently convinced of the usefulness of such a synodical association, had let their pastors travel to the synod without being accompanied by an authorized delegate, the beginning was poor, but Dr. Sihler writes that this was desired, "for we knew that the works of God always have such a beginning, following the example of the mustard seed and the Christ Child in the manger. But the gracious and merciful God gave such a rich and spiritual blessing without all our merit and worthiness that in the course of 38 years the mustard seed became a mighty tree. Even then, the office of a visitor, who was to visit the scattered Lutherans and serve them with God's Word for the time being, was discussed and established. After various questions had been answered and expert opinions given, the final election of officials was held at the end of this first synodical assembly. The result was that Pastor C. F. W. Walther was elected as President, Dr. W. Sihler as Vice President, Pastor F. W. Husmann as Secretary and F. W. Barthel as Treasurer. Since the synodical address with which the already appointed presidents are in the habit of opening the synodical conventions had to be missing at this first meeting, we are publishing instead the pronouncement which Pastor Walther added when he published the letter of renunciation sent to the Ohio Synod by Pastors Sihler, Becker, Ernst Winkler, Burger, A. Schmidt, A. Selle, W. Richmann and A. Saupert in [\[Vol. 2\] No. 11 of *Der Lutheraner* of 1846](#). The withdrawal of the above pastors was, as Pastor Loehe remarks, judged by the Ohio Synod in the *Lutheran Standard* from a very high horse. But Walther, looking back

on those proceedings and looking forward to what was accomplished in Chicago the following year, writes the following:

The negotiations of those pastors with the Ohio Synod show us that unfortunately! also in America no denomination has fallen into such a deep decline as the fellowship of those who call themselves "Lutheran". All the sects of this country are more zealous in preserving the false doctrines on which they are founded and which give them their peculiar character, than are the so-called Lutherans of this country, who are more careful to hold on to the holy and pure doctrine based on the clear Word of God, which was familiar to them by God's ineffable grace. Yes, we see that the American Lutheran Church is dominated not only by negligence and indifference, but even by enmity against the true Lutheran Church; it has retained nothing but the name; it has lost the old truth and the witnessing spirit.

But we also see that we have no cause to despair in the existence of the Lutheran Church in America. God again seizes the winnowing fork to sweep His threshing floor and sift His wheat. God has evidently decided that He will no longer stand by while the false saints secretly steal, and fish in murky waters. God has again begun to open eyes here and there that recognize with horror the apostasy of which the Lutherans are guilty. God awakens again here and there men who loudly call upon them to return to their abandoned first love. God be praised! After a long winter, "the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land". (Song of Solomon 2:11-13) Up, up, therefore, dear brethren! Let us not quietly watch as false brethren join together ever more firmly to undermine and sweep aside the very foundation of our Church. These, because they deceitfully fence under our name, are more dangerous than our declared enemies; they are allies of our enemies and yet they are in the midst of our camps. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision" [Ps. 2:4], for "though the waters thereof roar and be troubled,

though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early." [Ps. 46:3-5] But as impossible as it is to suppress Luther's doctrine, which is to oust God's Word from the world, so easily it is possible that if we did not have it (Tit. 1:9-11) and contend for it (Jude 3) we will lose the treasure (2 John 8:9) and will be rejected as unfaithful stewards. Therefore, let us who call ourselves not only hypocritically Lutheran, but also want to be and remain so in fact and truth, let us gather together again and gather around the banner of the old unchanging doctrine of our Church; let us implore the Lord to arise and create a help so that we may teach again with confidence; let us fight together against all falsifications with the sword of the Spirit [Eph. 6:17] and together bear the shame with which the Lord calls his servants. Nor should we hope that the Church will be restored to a flourishing state in these last dreadful times, but we must not give up hope that our witness and struggle will not be in vain, but will be a praise to the Lord and will convert many a soul from the error of its ways."

[\[↑\]](#) **The second and third synodical conventions.**

On the Wednesday after the Feast of the Trinity, June 21, 1848, the pastors and delegates gathered for the [second annual synod](#) in the Evangelical Lutheran Trinity Church in St. Louis. Under the chairmanship of President Pastor C.F.W. Walther, the individual sessions were opened with a hymn, reading of a chapter from the Pastoral Letters or from the Acts of the Apostles and with prayer. A good number of new members joined, so that the number of standing synodical members (including the advisory ones) rose to 50 pastors and 5 teachers. Already at the first synod gathered in Chicago

several North German pastors were received, namely: [J.W. Husmann](#), and [C.J.H. Fick](#), who had arrived in St. Louis just before the opening and organization of the Missouri Synod, then was called to New Melle Mo. He was followed by more and more candidates from Hannover, namely: [E. Brauer](#), [A. Wolter](#), [Roebbelen](#), [Franke](#), and [F. König](#); which is why, numerically speaking, the Saxons were only a small part of the synod from its very beginning.

Dr. Sihler wrote the following about this second synodical convention to Pastor Loehe: “What use would the growing number be if the unity in the Spirit did not grow at the same time and builders were no longer united with one another to build the holy Church? Only by God's grace did it happen that this unity in the Spirit, this merging and submerging of our little persons in the Triune God and His work of grace, in the building up of his Church, inspired and permeated us all. Frankness and humility were the prevailing tone in our deliberations, and even if different views on practical matters were initially expressed, mutual understanding and unanimous resolution always took place, and I am certain that none of the dear brethren returned from the Synod to their congregations without rich blessings on their hearts and minds and manifold encouragement.”

Among the most important decisions taken at this synod were the following: 1) The transfer of the college and theological seminary from Altenburg to St. Louis. From this scholarly institution emerged Pastors [R. Lange](#) and H. Wunder, the former a professor at the seminary in St. Louis for many years, the second long-time district president in Chicago, Ill. 2) After Pastor Loehe had complied with the wishes of the Synod and had handed over the seminary he had founded in Fort Wayne, Indiana, to the Missouri Synod on the condition that it would always serve the Lutheran Church, the German language would also be retained as the sole means of teaching,

a constitution and plan of studies was also drafted for this institution, which was to achieve the training of candidates for the office of ministry more in a more practical and direct way. After only two years of existence, 14 students, eight as pastors and four as school teachers, two of whom had gone to Altenburg for academic training, were able to take office. The names of the above eight pastors are: J. Seidel, K. Kalb, J. Birkmann, O. Strafen, C. Fricke, A. Auer, P. Heid, M. Johannes.

The sessions of this synod in St. Louis were attended by numerous people; even the brave members of the St. Louis congregation took a lively interest and showed themselves full of zeal. “There was nothing to be seen of those spiteful [Argus-eyes](#) who only seek to interfere everywhere, but joy radiated from their eyes at every instructive hearing, at every salutary resolution. I must confess (Prof. A. Craemer writes), I had not thought of it that way, because I was afraid to find a somewhat Americanized congregation, but it is German and Lutheran and so was also the synod. As far as mission was concerned, the eye of the Mission Committee was on the Indians of Oregon, where there are thousands of Indians, etc.” It was of great importance that the members of the St. Louis congregation should also give the impression to all synodical members that they were a living congregation imbued with the Spirit of Christ, because at that time in Germany one began to fear that democratic principles would have interfered with the synodical constitution, which would have been to the detriment of the Church. From one side they began to shout out the newly organized synod as too independent (as if it arbitrarily perverted Christian freedom). the delegates sent by Pastor Loehe hurried all the more to reassure him with the good news from and about St. Louis. But most instructive in this respect is the synodical address with which Pastor Walther opened this second synodical convention. *) The

*) The entire synodical address is printed in Dr. Walther's [Lutheran Crumbs p. 517](#). [[Lutherische Brosamen](#); [Baseley translation, From Our Master's Table, p. 243](#); also in [Moving Frontiers, p. 170-177](#)]

Lack of space allows only a few things to be mentioned. The question which is answered in this address is as follows: “Why should and can we do our work with joy, although we have no power other than the power of the Word?” As the first motive he mentions: because Christ has given his servants only this power and no other power, and even the holy Apostles did not appropriate any other, and therefore gave the servants of the Church a serious warning against the use of any other authority. Christ's kingdom and Church is a kingdom of truth, a spiritual heavenly kingdom, a kingdom of God, in which dwell all free citizens of the kingdom of Heaven, members of God's household, prophets, priests and kings. But who is now the one who has authority in this kingdom? It is Jesus Christ alone! He declares this Himself. He says, “I am a King.” “I am the Good Shepherd.” “One is your Master, Christ.” But the Apostle calls Him: “The head of the church above all things, which is His body” etc. But it is His Word by which Christ exercises authority in his Church. We see this in the last declaration with which He departed from His disciples, Matt. 28:18-20. This is “the right scepter” [[Ps. 45:7](#)] with which He rules His people, the “rod and staff” [[Ps. 23:4](#)] with which He feeds His army. The authority and command is denied to every other person by the saying: “One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.” [[Matt. 23:8](#)] So He makes them all equal to each other in His Church, and the dear Apostles demand no more submissiveness than under Jesus Christ, namely under His Word. They also warn all those who administer an office in the Church, above all, to rule faithfully and earnestly. 1 Peter 5:1-4 Therefore, in the Church, in which Christ reigns, there should not and cannot be any other authority to which all must submit than the authority of the Word. — Therefore, here in this country, where pastors have no other authority, we should be all the more filled with joy that we demand obedience only when Christ Himself speaks through us, namely when we preach his Word.

Just there, where the pastor is given only the power of the Word, but also the full power, where the congregation of Christ hears the Word from the mouth of its preacher and accepts it as the Word of God, there the pastor is in the right relationship to his congregation, as a messenger of God the Most High; not as a servant of man, but as a servant of Christ. — Those who do not love the Word will indeed part from us; but those who love it, to them our fellowship will be a comforting refuge, and if they accept our resolutions, they will not bear them as a foreign burden, but as a benefit, and will represent and preserve them as their own. — “What the Word demands, let us not forgive any iota of it; — let happen to us as God wills, — here let us be unbending, as iron; if we do that, we can be unconcerned about the success of our work, it cannot then be in vain, for the Word does not return again empty, but accomplishes what the Lord had sent it for.”

[↑] At this second synodical convention, Pastor Wyneken of Baltimore from the Missouri Synod also joined, as did Pastor Hoyer of Philadelphia; since Pastor Brohm was also a member of the executive committee of a congregation in New York at that time, the newly formed synod already had points of contact in the East. Pastor E. Brauer, who immigrated from Hanover, Germany, learned how wonderfully God the Lord chooses a time and place for him when He sends His Word, when he stopped by Pastor Selle in Chicago. But he had traveled to Milwaukee to see Pastor Keyl. Since Selle had not yet returned on Sunday, Brauer had to hold the service in Chicago in place of the absent pastor. Finally Pastor Selle returned and approached the new helper in Addison (20 miles from Chicago), where many a preacher had preached in vain and had to leave without having accomplished anything. Although it was believed that Brauer would hardly be elected because the congregation was United [**Reformed and Lutheran**], it was good for the sake of the testimony if

the people once again heard a preacher who held fast to the Confessions and did not engage in any mixture of truth and false doctrine. Therefore Brauer visited the congregation in Addison although his inclination was to go to the state of Missouri. In Addison, he met a different preacher who was called by the church from 400 miles away to deliver his test sermon the next Sunday. He was the son of a Hanoverian pastor, from the same village where most of the local people came from. Brauer wanted to turn back, despite the rain and storm, but could not have a horse at hand, so he had to spend the night with his competitor under the same roof and under the same blanket. On Sunday they both preached; the latter was a colourful mix-up, he started to interpret the Ten Commandments, but he could not do it. Brauer, who had preached in the morning according to the other's wishes, was immediately elected by the congregation. But he told the people freely that he was a servant of the Lutheran Church and could not serve a mixed congregation. They still wanted to keep him, but got into conflict when he presented them with a congregational constitution in which only the name "Lutheran" was mentioned. Brauer explained to them his and their point of view in more detail, from which fourteen Reformed families finally left and were compensated liberally by the Lutherans. So Brauer became a pastor in Addison and was happy to hear old and young speak Low German in this large settlement. Over the years, the neglected people had grown into a flourishing congregation, which now has the blessed Teacher's Seminary under its roof. Pastor E. Brauer also joined the Missouri Synod in St. Louis, which already counted forty pastors at this second convention.

[↑] At the [third synodical meeting](#), held in Fort Wayne in 1849, thirteen pastors joined again, along with three school teachers, and 16 congregations were taken in by the synod upon their written petition. The synod, it is said, had the good fortune to be spared from contentious communications at this third convention,

other memorials required careful consideration. The mission stations Frankenmuth and Bethanien in Michigan were transferred to the Synod of Missouri, Ohio and other States by the board of the [Evangelical Lutheran Mission in Leipzig](#) and by Pastor Loehe by a formal act of transfer, “in the expectation that this synod would do everything in its power to promote the missionary work.” Already at the first synod a missionary commission was appointed, to which the missionaries Auch and Meyer, who had left the Michigan Synod, also belonged. The Fort Wayne students Eirich Sr., Stubnatzy and Volkert were examined at the request of vacant congregations and recommended to them. The Synod was divided into conference districts, and finally a publishing company was established for the purpose of publishing churchly writings. The synodical address at the opening of this third assembly was delivered by Vice President Dr. Sihler. In it he recognized first of all with gratitude and joy that in the past year not only the number of workers who stood together in the Synod for the work of the Lord had grown to sixty, but that there had been no disturbance of the unity of the Spirit from any side, all were of the same mind, supported by the same faith, moved by the same love. In some congregations, sound church discipline, good order and customs are also evident; the pastors are once again regarded by their church members as their spiritual fathers, and the congregations as such are engaged in internal and external mission (not through individual associations), and there are also excellent congregational schools, whereby the dear youth are snatched away from the otherwise prevailing savagery. But there is also a reason to humble oneself under the hand of God and to suffer! Some congregations whose pastors belong to us still look at the Synod with suspicion, partly because of a tendency toward unionism, partly toward enthusiasm. Furthermore, the stubbornness and ignorance of individuals in the congregations is a problem, which is why many pastors find it difficult to develop a strong

collaborative congregational life. Nevertheless, no one should run away from the school of the cross, and in looking up to the Lord, one should also look joyfully and confidently into the new synodical year. — Thus began the year 1850, with which a new important phase in the history of the young synod begins. Hitherto the Lord had helped us.

[\[↑\]](#) **A look at the educational institutions.**

A look at the educational institutions of the German Evangelical Lutheran Missouri Synod will be in order already here, since from the very beginning the Synod also in its synodical constitution made it its duty "to establish, maintain and supervise institutions for the training of future pastors and school teachers for the service of the Church (Chapter V, § 9).

The decline of American Lutheranism was also evident in the fact that the educational system was in a bad state. There were no higher or lower schools that were run according to the scriptural principles of the Lutheran Church. Also the training and final examination of the candidates for the office of ministry was often entrusted to one or several older pastors who themselves had little knowledge of the Lutheran doctrine. In the course of the years, as immigration increased, academically educated secondary school [*gymnasiums*] students and several theologians from Germany also arrived. The Basle and Gossner Missions used to send the weakest of their pupils to America (the more gifted were sent to Asia and Africa), which all together contributed to the fact that the synods, in which so many different elements were found, became a model map of the different schools of thought that can be found in the present. In the best case, a conglomerate (an external formation) was created, but by no means a uniform organism. In such synods there can be no talk of mutual, fraternal supervision and doctrinal discipline. There was therefore astonishment in other synods when the Missouri Synod made official visits of the president for the purpose of supervising the doctrine,

administration of the office, and the life of pastors and school teachers. “We tell the brethren that this is not possible in America,” cried the *Lutheran Observer*. But the Missouri Synod wanted to lay the foundation even deeper for a firm doctrine and for the maintenance of pure doctrine, by planning educational institutions in which the future teachers for church and school, enlightened in heart and mind, and as called in one spirit and faith, became more and more of one heart and soul even before they entered public office. It was already reported in the third chapter of this book [[p. 52](#)] how early on it was decided to establish such an educational institution in Perry County, which was headed by Pastor H. Loeber after Pastor F. Walther was called away. Although Rector Gönner was assigned to assist him, Pastor Loeber felt that his declining physical strength would not be sufficient for much longer and agreed when the Missouri Synod, at its first session in 1847, asked the Perry County congregations whether they would be inclined to leave the Altenburg academic school [*gymnasium*] and theological seminary to the direction and care of the Synod. These congregations agreed to do so, but the congregation in Altenburg wanted the institution to remain in their midst. The St. Louis congregation promised that as soon as this institution was moved to St. Louis, they would give two acres of land, over \$2000 for construction and substantial contributions to maintain the institution. Although the Altenburg congregation renewed their opposition to the transfer, they finally gave in when the Third Synod of Fort Wayne again decided that it would be better for the welfare of the Church if the institution were moved to St. Louis. [Even before](#) the transfer was completed, Pastor Loeber, who was faithful and warmly beloved at the institution, passed away on August 19, 1849, as noted above. [[?](#), on [p. 57](#), [this was reported as August 13](#)]

[↑] In October of the same year Pastor [C.F.W. Walther](#) was elected professor of theology. His congregation in St. Louis agreed to his acceptance of this call, with the

condition that Prof. Walther would also officially participate in the government of the congregation as pastor and preach a sermon in both congregations every month.

The construction of the educational institution building in St. Louis on the land donated by the congregation was started in a sprightly manner. According to the adopted plan, it was to consist of a central building and two wings. Due to lack of funds, the southern wing was to be built first. The foundation stone was laid on November 8, 1849. It was a day of great joy. The sainted Pastor Buenger performed the ceremonial laying of the foundation stone after Prof. Walther had given an address in which he showed how the Church had always shown itself to be a faithful, sincere nurse and friend of art and science, and how it had always had to prove itself according to its nature and purpose. This address at the laying of the foundation stone is found in Dr. Walther's [Lutheran Crumbs p. 322](#). [*Lutherische Brosamen*, **Baseley translation**, [From Our Master's Table, p. 155](#),] Especially the Methodists, some of whom now disagree, claimed at that time that secular scholarship is not compatible with humility and world denial, as many monastic orders and the [Anabaptists](#), [Carlstadt](#) and [Thomas Münzer](#) at the head, have done, Dr. Walther, on the other hand, argues that one should not believe that for the sake of such occurrences the Church can rightly be reproached as if she, the Church, was an enemy of all enlightenment, an enemy of art and science, as if she shied away from the light: History shows rather that wherever the Church, with the Gospel in her hand, let the banner of the cross flutter among the deep-sunken idolaters, not only did it follow the plough, spade and sickle, but also higher art and science became native there. The Church's own interest requires the same, because if the Church lost knowledge of the ancient language, history, antiquity, the calendar, etc., she would also lose the understanding of the sacred Scriptures on which she is founded. Therefore, the great reformer of the Church rightly wrote: “As dear as the Gospel is to us, so earnestly let us hold fast upon

the languages.” — — — Furthermore, since the Church is not a despotic state, not a papacy, neither large nor small, science should not be the monopoly of a special class, a caste of priests. “Every Christian should carry the [Urim and Thummim](#) of Truth as a spiritual priest on his own chest. The layman should therefore conduct research in the Scriptures himself and believe with free conviction, without relying on human authority. Without human, priestly mediation, he should be certain of his relationship with God... yes, he should be able and become ever more capable of judging the doctrine of his teacher... ..only then can he follow the Word of his eternal Founder: ‘One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.’” [[Matt. 23:8](#)] — At the end of the memorable address Dr. Walther exclaims: “May our Church in this place be a faithful nurturer of the arts and of learning, — but may these never become the idol on whom altars are built, but only the means by which the Church is built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets in this Western world [[Occident](#)], gloriously adorned and bravely and victoriously defended, promoting true enlightenment and the welfare of the world, but above all spreading the glory of God and praising and glorifying his name until the end of time! Amen.”

The school moved to St. Louis in December of the same year. In 1849 the institution, which at that time could only move into one wing, was housed in the new building of that time. A few years later, [Prof. Biewend](#) was appointed to St. Louis as a teacher of philology. Thanks to his excellent knowledge of languages and natural sciences, he was of great service to the school until his unfortunately very early death. After Dr. Walther has been at the head of this institution for 34 years as president and as its first professor, the institution now has six theological professors and one steward. The number of students is currently 107. In a period of constant flourishing, the seminary was allowed to discharge 39 theologically educated candidates to public office in the summer of 1884, so that

the total number of Concordians who have come out of this institution over the years is now almost 400.

[↑] In addition to this theoretical theological institution, the Missouri Synod owned the aforementioned educational institution at Fort Wayne, which was mostly founded by Pastor Loehe, and which was initiated and expanded by Dr. Sihler since he was called to Fort Wayne as Pastor Wyneken's successor. The goal of this institution was from the beginning to give the students primarily a church-practical education. Older young people who cannot attend a formal secondary school, but who are equipped with the necessary gifts of the Spirit, especially with a good memory, will be helped by training, if they are interested in the Word of God as a result of a serious conversion of heart, so that they can follow a call to the preaching ministry. In November 1846, Dr. Sihler received a capable co-worker at the seminary in Prof. [A. Wolter](#), who had been described to him by Pastor Loehe as a capable servant of Christ. Wolter lived entirely for these God-fearing fellows, as Dr. Sihler called the students, and worked in great blessing at the seminary, for which at that time fourteen acres of land with a house, about a mile from the city, were purchased by the members of the congregation. Then cholera broke out, which cost sixty victims in the congregation alone; the last victim was Prof. A. Wolter, who had been caring, with two students, for an orphaned family that had lost both parents. The next day he drew up his will and the following day he died, 31 years old. Prof. A. Wolter had earned the love of all during the short period of his work. The students felt orphaned, the congregation mourned, and Dr. Sihler was the one who suffered most. He now continued the school with twenty students alone until in 1850 Pastor [A. Craemer](#) was appointed professor at this practical seminary. The same was received with joy and faithfully took care of the students in every way and in every need. In the congregation and in the whole Fort Wayne area he was also active and

has remained unforgettable to this day. In 1860, it was considered a good idea to move this practical preaching seminary to St. Louis, and to turn the Ft. Wayne institution into an expanded great secondary school [*gymnasium*]. For the time being the seminary was transferred to St. Louis and with great pain Sihler and Prof. Craemer separated after eleven years of working together. The congregation also saw these older students, with whom the members had often been in blessed contact, reluctantly part ways with Ft. Wayne. The large collegiate building, which was newly built, now filled with young students who had to go through six classes until they completed the whole course. The current Fort Wayne Concordia Seminary currently has seven professors and 176 students. Nevertheless, the older members of the congregation complain that the first love that prevailed under Prof. Craemer is no longer returning! Although the old St. Louis collegiate building was gradually extended completely, it still lacked space when the students of the practical seminary had to live together with the theological students. Even then the cost of a large new building was being considered, but it was not until 1875, when a vacant collegiate building in Springfield, Illinois, was offered to the Synod at a low price and purchased by it, that the Synod decided to move the practical seminary to Springfield, and once again Prof. A. Craemer and his students had to take up the walking staff. If necessary, the students first go through a pro-seminary there, in which the necessary preliminary knowledge is acquired, after which they receive theological instruction from Professors A. Craemer and H. Wyneken. In addition to four professors, Pastor F. Lochner is also active in teaching, and the number of students in Springfield last year became so large that they had to pitch tents in the open field next to the college buildings. The current number of pupils in Springfield is 189. The growth of these educational institutions could seem alarming

if the way of life of these pupils, who flock together there, were to resemble the fast life of the students who hang around the German universities. But this is not so. It also emerges from the serious address which Dr. Walther gave in November 1883 at the inauguration of the new, large seminary building in St. Louis, that the students of all the educational institutions of our Synod work in a different sense and spirit than the spirit of the world. They are not only taught by their faithful, loyal and zealous teachers, but their hearts are also cultivated and educated in Christian love! They are made to feel that they should grow not only in all the knowledge and ability necessary for their future calling, but also in upright godliness. As early as 1846, Dr. Sihler, in No. 5, Year III of *Der Lutheraner* [[p. 29](#); [Baseley translation](#)], presented the purpose of the preacher's seminary in the following terms: "We do not conceal it, but freely confess that it is our heartfelt prayer, desire and will to serve the Church under the grace and blessing of the Triune God,

1) who hold fast to the example of the saving doctrine and remain in what is known to them, as the orthodox Church, which now is called Lutheran, on the basis of the divine Word, believed, confessed and taught from the very beginning;

2) who therefore have nothing to do with the anti-scriptural syncretism [*Kirchenmengerei*] and false unionism of our days, etc.;

3) who have gained a sound and thorough knowledge and, God willing, also inner experience of this truth;

4) who is able to teach this truth to others, rightly dividing and also rightly combining Law and Gospel, and to resist schisms and fanatics;

5) who have a pure humility of heart and a sincere love for their Church, as those who have the mystery of faith in a clean conscience;

6) who are ready to suffer joyfully and willingly all kinds of crosses and tribulations from within and without, for the sake of the precious confession and the pure and only doctrine;

7) who will take heed to themselves and to all the flock which the Lord and chief Shepherd may one day entrust them to feed them faithfully, both as a whole and individually;

8) who at last also diligently work to keep the unity of Spirit in the bond of peace [[Eph. 4:3](#)] also among themselves, remembering that they serve — — their God in the same most holy cause, namely in the edification of [His](#) holy Church as [His](#) co-laborers. —

[↑] Of the three educational institutions mentioned above, which belong to the entire Synod, the fourth is the [Teachers' Seminary](#).

This was at first located at Fort Wayne and was initially left there under the direction of Professors [Fleischmann](#) and [A. Selle](#), after the practical preacher's seminary had already been moved from Ft. Wayne to St. Louis. Meanwhile, the need and lack of such school teachers, who not only have knowledge and teaching skills, but also, driven by the love of Christ, have a heart for school children, was so great that a larger school teacher training seminary was considered necessary. The above-mentioned congregation in [Addison](#), Illinois, near Chicago, donated plenty of land, paid a large part of the costs of the construction, and in 1865 the Teachers' Seminary was opened in Addison, Illinois. Since Prof. Fleischmann had accepted a call to a congregation, Pastor [W. Lindemann](#), who had previously been in West Cleveland, was appointed director of the Addison Teachers' Seminary, in addition to Prof. A. Selle, who still works in Addison today. He had already been trained in a teachers' training seminary in [Hanover](#), and later he attended the preacher seminary in this country. As assistant pastor and later as pastor in Cleveland he showed such pedagogical gifts that everyone recognized him as the most suitable man for the directorship of that school. He not only had the formal teaching skills to share his knowledge with his students in a stimulating way and make it their living possession,

he also showed himself as a strong manly character as director, by virtue of which he also energetically influenced the attitude of his pupils, as a faithful and determined Lutheran, who lived God's Word and the confession of his church in his heart. With a sharp eye and correct tact he practiced such discipline that not only aroused respect, but also heartfelt trust among the students. Dr. Sihler says of him: "Without having to pass through the dormitory and workplaces of the seminarians many times in restless haste and superfluous inspection eagerness, the director's footsteps were, as it were, heard throughout the entire institution, even though he did not move his feet but let them rest under his desk." The blow and loss for the Synod was all the more severe when the Lord was pleased to call him quickly out of this life in January 1879. Only 52 years old, he had, humanly speaking, exhausted his powers, which is why Dr. Sihler applied the word to him: "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." [Ps. 69:9] — As much as this loss was mourned, one was allowed to experience that the Lord God did not let the orphaned school be laid low for too long. Lindemann's position was happily filled again and the gap was filled by the appointment of the present director [E. Krauss](#), who, after attending three German universities and having previously served as a pastor in the Missouri Synod area of Wisconsin for several years, later served in the separated [or free] Lutheran Church at Baden [Germany], and from there again followed this call to the Addison institution. As the demands placed on the school teachers are also increasing in the areas of general knowledge, the English language, music, etc., the number of professors has also increased and now stands at seven. Director E. Krauss is also the editor of the [Evangelisch-lutherisches Schulblatt](#), which W. Lindemann had published since 1865. After 65 new students joined in the current year, the total number of students in Addison is now 196. — It remains to mention the

secondary schools [*Progymnasien*] founded in smaller circles within the synod by individual districts or by congregations in cities, in which preliminary work is done in preparation for the upper classes of the Ft. Wayne institution. Such schools are found in Milwaukee, New Orleans, Wittenberg, Wis., Concordia, Missouri, and New York City. In addition, there are a number of charitable institutions, a hospital, founded by the sainted Pastor J. F. Buenger, and an orphanage near St. Louis, as well as three other orphanages (in Addison, Ill., in Roxbury near Boston and in Wittenberg, Wis.), a deaf-mute institution in Royal Oak in Michigan, a boys' high school and a high school for girls in St. Louis. — The above-mentioned R. Hoffmann mentions in this connection the Synod's book publishing house founded in 1870 in St. Louis, also the Negro mission, which has its headquarters in Arkansas and in New Orleans, to which the recently started [mission to the Jews in New York](#) is added, in which Missionary [Landsmann](#) works with extraordinary success, also the [Lutheran Hospital](#) in the eastern part of New York City, which is maintained at great cost and has its own chaplain in the person of Pastor [F. Richmann](#), and finally the [emigrant mission](#) *) cultivated by the Synod on behalf of the whole Synodical Conference, which is located in

*) The addresses of emigrant missionaries who offer to advise German emigrants, mainly members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, are

in [New York](#): Pastor S. Keyl, 10 Battery Place,

in [Bremen](#): Wilhelm Vopel, Meadow Street 9,

in [Hamburg](#): Balt. Lorenz Meyer, Correspondent, old Gröningerstrasse 13,

Herm. Tormählen, Missionary, hostel to the homeland, near St. Annen 14,

in [Baltimore](#): W. Sallman, 177 East Pratt Street.

Since among the hundreds of thousands who each year seek a new home on the other side of the ocean there are also thousands who want to be Lutherans, but since the need that German Lutheran emigrants in America face is great, Pastor St. Keyl, urged by the love of Christ, decided as early as 1868 to minister to the German emigrants in the

New-York and in Baltimore for the immigrating German, also in Hamburg and in Bremen one agent each.

large port city, especially to help them to gain the necessary acquaintance with the American conditions, also to help them in a material way where it is necessary, and to advise them in such a way that they do not move to such places here in the country where they have to suffer spiritual atrophy and damage to the soul. Countless souls, often well disposed, who come from churches that want to be Lutheran, fall into the hands of the enemies and opponents of the Lutheran Church in America, who often already in German port cities exert all means to win them over for themselves.

After Pastor [St. Keyl](#) initially undertook this important work on his own, he was appointed in 1869 by the New York Conference of the seven Missourian pastors there. These, in conjunction with Baltimore and Pittsburgh, provided him with some salary. It was only when the work of our emigrant mission was underway that it was offered to and accepted by the general synod of Missouri, including St. Paul's. A brief overview of this Lutheran emigrant mission is given in the following:

From 1870 until the end of 1883, Pastor Keyl aided 27,000 people, administered \$417,636 for immigrants, advanced \$47,252 to new immigrants, of which \$5,000 is still outstanding, most of which is probably considered lost. He also provided employment for 1,042 persons.

Handed out to immigrants 247,669 tracts, 13,000 Missouri Synod calendars and Youth calendars.

In the last three years Pastor Keyl not only put 518 people into work, he also spent \$1481.81 as alms for hot meals, lodging, provisions for onward travel, etc. Most of the money that went out of his hands over the last three years, about \$222,000, was sent to Pastor Keyl by friends and relatives from America for immigrants, for which he procured ship tickets in Bremen and Hamburg, also from Antwerp and Rotterdam, and also in New York, where he procured rail tickets on arrival. About \$24,000 were advanced to immigrants for their continued journey from the Commission's coffers, of which all but \$4000 came back. Efforts are now under way to purchase our own Emigrant House. Since the mission of the Missouri Synod has for years been incompatible with the mission of the General Council, which was conducted in a completely different spirit, and nevertheless constantly assumed greater proportions since it is working alone,

— In view of all this R. Hoffman finally exclaims in [his book](#): “All this is the work of scarcely forty years; the seed, which was once strewn with trembling and fear, has given a thousand-fold harvest; no authority has protected the development with its arm, no state has offered the means, no coercion has extorted the money; voluntarily, the mites [[as in the widow’s mite, Mark 12:42](#)] of the rich and poor have been put into God’s treasury chest, unconstrained love has joined one to another; — who could fail to recognize the blessing of God? — Who could fail to see that prejudice has clouded the eye, that he will not gladly and joyfully admit: This is what the Lord has done!” [[see addendum p. IV](#)]

VII. [^]

Pastor J. A. A. Grabau’s pastoral letter and fine answer by pastors Loeber, Keyl, Gruber and Walther. [[Loehe’s basis for Grabau](#) (179); [Grabau’s background](#) (181); [Grabau’s “Pastoral Letter”](#) (184); [Saxon pastor’s reject Grabau’s theology](#) (185); [Grabau ignores Luther’s counsel](#) (187); [Saxon Pastors’s conciliatory response to Grabau](#) (192); [Grabau refuses colloquium with Walther](#) (199); [Wyneken’s 1852 judgment on Grabau’s theology](#) (201)] **The presentation and acceptance of the book by the church and the holy office of the Ministry. The fourth and fifth synodical conventions.** [[4th Synod 1850 – Walther’s address against Romanizing](#) (202); [Grabau and Walther compared](#) (204); [Walther’s book on Church and Ministry presented in 1851](#) (207); [Theses reviewed](#) (210); [Wyneken’s prophecy](#) (217)] [^]

[↑] As the *Church Notices* [[Kirchliche Mitteilungen](#), [Google Books](#)] show, Pastor Loehe not only had in mind the collection of the individual German members of the faith scattered throughout North America, but his goal was also to unite all Lutherans in America, in Australia, and in the whole world in one church body.

then such an Emigrant House would be of great benefit; meanwhile, the people who entrust themselves to our missionaries are accommodated in New York in proper, good emigrant lodgings. — It is highly advisable that emigrants who leave Germany should from the start put their travel affairs, especially the procurement of steamer tickets, in the hands of the emigrant missionary employed in Bremen or Hamburg. Whoever does this secures for himself from the beginning to the end of his journey the various services of our Lutheran emigrant mission. Before contacting another agent or paying a deposit, emigrants should seek the advice of the emigrant missionaries stationed in Bremen and Hamburg. Their addresses are noted above.

While he approved of the withdrawal of his emissaries from the unionist synods, and rejoices in the organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Missouri Synod, he was not entirely satisfied with the new character that church affairs in America had taken; he thought that he had let the pastors he sent out become independent too quickly, and that there was too much change in the manner in which ministerial positions were filled in America, that this should mainly be done by the ministerium or by the superintendent, that a strict church constitution should be introduced, and so on. On the latter, he already prepared a draft for the individual congregations, which was accepted by several Frankish colonies in Michigan, although it contained 72 paragraphs and prescribed very complicated regulations for the free-church Lutherans. Pastor Loehe often expressed his opinion that the political freedom here and the acquaintance with the American sects must have a contagious effect, because of the popular rule and dominant democratic direction, on the Lutheran church or in the Lutheran congregations. It is easy to show that this fear is based on an error. The freedom of the churches, which is shared by all denominations in this country, also gives the hierarchical sects, such as the papal Roman Church and the Episcopal Church, enough leeway to develop magnificently and to fortify themselves outwardly. Also the Methodists, especially the numerous episcopal bishops among the Methodists, have such a strict hierarchical constitution that the laity (the listeners) as such not only have nothing to advise and say, but also have no voice in the choice of pastors. The pastors, in turn, are taken away from their previous congregations after two or three years in defiance of their divine calling and, at the discretion of the bishops, transferred to another post. Just as the pope wants to have ready-to-serve puppets in the priests, who are his creatures, which he moves like chess pieces, sometimes here, sometimes there, so something similar can be seen in the smaller church fellowships, which

seek support for their existence in a well-trained constitution and in the structure and strict differentiation of the church estates.

[↑] On such a basis, according to which the pastors were at the same time “church masters” [*Kirchherren*], as they were sometimes called in the old German church orders, and as guardians of the house of God who were allowed to demand obedience in all things, there gathered in Milwaukee on June 25, 1845 “The Synod of the Lutheran Church emigrated from Prussia” [**Buffalo Synod**], as Pastor Grabau, Pastor Heinrich von Rohr, Pastor Leberecht Krause and Pastor G. A. Andermann called their newly formed synod. These four pastors had eighteen delegates from their congregations with them, who, however, were also in a subordinate relationship to the pastors at the synod. The large number of these congregation delegates can be explained by the number of Lutherans, who from the beginning in Germany had mainly joined Pastor Grabau, since he emigrated to America in 1839 (about eight months later than Stephan) after obtaining permission from the [Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm III](#). Pastor J. A. A. Grabau had been twice imprisoned in Prussia for the energetic resistance in which he opposed the Union, and had no direct contact with the separated Lutherans of [Breslau](#). As he used to say, these Silesian Lutherans were mainly concerned with the preservation of the pure doctrine of the Lord's Supper in their fight against the syncretistic union, but he also wanted to maintain the old Pomeranian church order. After the [peace treaty of Osnabrück in 1648](#) had secured the external existence of the Lutheran Church, so Grabau maintained, the King had no right to introduce a different church order through his cabinet orders. But while he did so, he and his people left the country to the King, and the church emigrated to America. He maintained that according to chapter 12 of the Revelation of John, America is the desert in which the woman, that is, the Church, should be preserved from the face of the dragon (i.e., the Prussian Union)

for an appointed time from the seduction of the whole world. The Buffalo Synod accordingly carried the image of the woman fleeing from the dragon in its seal. When it proved impossible in later years to secure such authority and recognition in America as Pastor Grabau wished for the Pomeranian church order, which had once upon a time been introduced and confirmed the old Pomeranian dukes and the cities in that country, he missed the aid of the secular arm more and more. This arm was supposed to strengthen Buffalo church discipline and secure churches and pulpits for the Buffalo pastors, namely for those who submitted to Grabau's church government, as they used to say, to the Senior and his ministerium. According to American laws of the state, the first thing to be done was to have trustees elected from the congregation to administer church property on behalf of the congregation, but the Buffalo ministerium worked hard to achieve this, either to chain the trustees to the Buffalo Synodical Court by court order (which is also done in other hierarchical synods) or to have such a condition recorded in the deed of sale by the seller that in the event of a split, all church property should remain with that part of the congregation which is willing to remain under the jurisdiction of the Buffalo Synod. It was hoped that the support of the authorities would be assured by this arrangement, which in the course of time has consistently led to church trials. The Church itself, Pastor Grabau taught, is the visible assembly, composed of the teaching staff (*Lehrstand*) and the household (*Hausstand*), which belong together in such a way that the teaching staff (the Ministerium) has to teach and order, but the household has to listen and follow the orders that the ministry makes. — In human terms, a union of these Prussian Lutherans, which grew more and more through the congregations of Pastor Ehrenstrom and Pastor Kindermann, who followed in 1843, with the Saxon congregations that had settled in St. Louis and Perry County,

would have been an incalculable blessing for the Church in general. Pastor Loehe also wished for a mutual accommodation. Meanwhile, the principles on which Pastor Grabau founded his church government were so hierarchical from the beginning that the Saxon pastors, headed at that time by the humble Pastor H. Loeber, could never agree with Pastor Grabau. He claimed: since our fathers were Lutheran, we know that the church rules written by the fathers are also Lutheran, therefore the laymen owe obedience to the pastors when they make their decisions on the basis of the old church rules; also in matters of adiaphora and in such cases where the application of the Word of God could be doubtful, it is part of the ministry of the pastors to make the decision. To let the congregation itself be considered a judge in matters of faith and church, that is an independent or Anabaptist principle. Pastor Grabau also often declared in the presence of his congregation members (as is still confirmed today by ear witnesses) that although Stephan had fallen into a godless life, his doctrine and the episcopal government he wanted to establish on the basis of the given scriptural foundations were nevertheless right and proper. But the Saxon Lutherans could not and did not want to give up the spiritual achievement they had gained from that time by their renunciation of Stephanism. They had also experienced what a blessing it is when the pastors desire obedience only for the Word of God and the church members follow the Word for the sake of the Word. Pastor Grabau and his followers, however, believed that this was the spirit from hell which granted the above-mentioned freedom to the congregations; instead of a correct church order, mob rule, namely rebellion and revolution, had to take place as a result of this doctrine which the Saxons led. — It is sometimes still considered that the Missourians from the beginning were concerned to found opposition altars with the help of their doctrine of the spiritual priesthood and of the Christian freedom of the Christian man,

and to alienate the members of the Buffalo Synod; but the very beginning, and through the whole course of the dispute between the Missouri and Buffalo Synods, shows this is something far different.

While Pastor Grabau stood alone in Buffalo, and not only to serve the Lutherans who had settled in the Buffalo area, but also those who had stayed behind in New York, he turned to the Saxon pastors with the request to send him a candidate to help. The then candidate Brohm set out on this journey, travelled through Buffalo and accepted the call from the New York Lutherans. Likewise, the Saxons sent [Pastor Geyer](#) to Wisconsin to a number of Lutherans, while Pastor Kindermann, who had settled [Kirchhayn](#) in that state with his congregation there, had himself directed this more distant congregation to the Saxons for the sake of spiritual ministrations. However even before Pastor Geyer arrived in Wisconsin, Pastor Kindermann wanted to prevent this calling, which had already been initiated, because it had turned out that the Saxons did not want to agree with the teaching contained in Pastor Grabau's *Pastoral Letter* [*Hirtenbrief* – photocopy with English translation [here, p. 11](#); (Z); Harrison-Walther *Church and Office*, p. 363 ff.; *Soli Deo Gloria*, p. 141 ff.], especially with regard to ordination and the authority of the pastor.

[↑] Pastor Grabau had already sent out a pastoral letter signed by six church leaders of his congregation on December 1, 1840, and sent it to the Saxon pastors with the remark that if they found anything to criticize in this letter, they should advise him. Already at the beginning of this pastoral letter it is said that because it is so easy in America that everyone chooses his own thing, whereby the church can easily suffer damage, that therefore it is the duty of the ministers of the church to restrain this independent conduct. This is appealed to from [Article 14 of the Augsburg Confession](#), according to which no one should publicly teach in the Church or administer the Sacraments unless he is regularly called. Among the elements of the regular call, seven requirements are now listed [[p. 12-14](#)]: the candidate must above all things

be tested and tried with regard to his spiritual gifts, and then ordained by the laying on of hands of the pastors who are present, upon his confession, after which he is to be introduced to the respective church. In the ministry, in the personal calling, lies the testimony of Christ, that he speaks the word and that he heals. 1 Cor. 10:16: “The cup of blessing which we (i.e. the ordained pastors) bless” and so on. “By this we are convinced”, (so this pastoral letter teaches) [\[p. 15\]](#) “that a man frivolously chosen by the congregation may neither give absolution nor distribute the body and blood of Christ, rather he gives mere bread and wine; Christ commends himself to his divinely irrefutable order, not our caprice and disorder”. — In chapter 3 of the pastor's letter, Pastor Grabau again called one such person whom the congregation [*Kirchengemeine*] raises up, an uncalled one! [\[p. 17: "which the non-chosen and unordained cannot"\]](#) He advises to leave the children untouched until the arrival of a pastor, as well as the closing of the marriage covenants [\[p. 18, #4\]](#), if it is at all possible until then. Grabau insists that everything that is against the old Lutheran church orders must be regarded as an innovation. If a pastor should be found with errors in his doctrine, the congregation must leave the judgment in the doctrine to the other teachers, for the letter finally says: “Your teachers are not teachers of a false church, so you (laymen) can presuppose with them a genuine knowledge of the church doctrine, and a deeper knowledge than you can have, since they have learned to believe, to teach, and to keep you in the right faith, but you (laymen) have learned to believe, and to be kept and sanctified in the right faith.” [\[p. 18-19\]](#)

[\[↑\]](#) Under the date of July 3, 1843 Pastor [G. H. Loeber](#) wrote to Pastor Grabau, in which he, as his “loyal friend and co-worker” in fellowship with Pastors Gruber and Walther, first and foremost expressed his joy that Pastor Brohm, while passing through Buffalo, had been warmly received by Pastor Grabau and had arrived happily in New York, and that Pastor Grabau also promised a visit to

the Saxon pastors, that the Saxons had already discussed with Pastor Grabau and his congregations the possibility of founding a teaching institution together. Loeber further reports that at Pastor Grabau's request, the pastoral letter had been carefully examined, and that the summary judgement on its contents was that it seemed to them, the Saxon pastors, that in this pastoral letter, with regard to the old church order, which was so strongly emphasized, the essential and the inessential, the divine and the human, were confused, and thus Christian freedom was restricted, and on the other hand more was attributed to the office of the ministry than was due to it, and thus the spiritual priesthood of the congregations was neglected.

Although Pastor Loeber was very careful in his critique of the pastoral letter, which Pastor Grabau had desired, it becomes clear already at the beginning of the protracted dispute that the Saxon pastors had to assert important doctrines, because they had to fight anew for the same principles on which Luther based the right to reform the church. Although Pastor Grabau's pastoral letter and the related writings do not yet explicitly deal with the doctrine of the Church, it is clear from the letter itself that the author does not let the divine Word be the sole foundation on which the Church is built, but rather that according to his teaching, the power and validity of the holy sacraments and the effect of preaching depend on the rightful call of the preacher. Grabau taught that God wants to act with us only through authorized official pastors, and that therefore only a preacher who has been rightfully called and ordained can, through his office, bring about the effect that bread and wine are truly consecrated in the Lord's Supper and that the body and blood of Christ are communicated therein. When the sacraments are administered, Lutheran pastors would thus be equal to the Roman Mass priests inasmuch as these, who are to continue the redemptive activity of Christ on earth, are also taught that they alone, by virtue of their ordination as ordained priests, can celebrate Mass

and can mediate between God and men (the laity). Pastor Loeber, on the other hand, writes in his critique that although the ordination as a public confirmation of the call, as it is called in our confessional writings, and should be approved and maintained at all times, like every laudable general ceremony; but although the office for the proclamation of the Word is a divine order, the Word can also be powerful outside of the public office, as we know from Scripture and experience, because especially in emergencies God has also made use of people who are not in public office. So also the words of institution in the administration of the holy sacraments are not only efficacious because of the ministerial office to which the Lord acknowledges, but the Word itself is powerful according to Heb. 4:12. So the official ministers are not able to bring about that bread and wine are really consecrated and distributed as sacraments; the "we" to which the Pastoral Letter appeals (the blessed cup which we bless) has no such signifying expression in the basic text of 1 Cor 10:16, and it would consequently be very doubtful whether emergency baptism is a real baptism, and finally our Church teaches expressly according to the Word of God that our faith and sacrament does not depend on the person, not only whether he is godly or evil, but also whether consecrated or unconsecrated, called or crept in. [[↑](#)] Indeed, if the devil himself would creep in, and in human form would give us the sacraments according to the right words of institution, we should not doubt that we have received the right sacrament. This is the clear testimony of Luther (Walch. Ed. XIX, 1551) [[Am Ed. 38](#) "[The Private Mass and the Consecration of the Priests](#)", 200; [StL 19, 1271-1272](#)], in which he praises the power of the divine Word so gloriously in the true faith. Nonetheless, Pastor Grabau, in his supposed refutation of the critique, insists on this false doctrine and claims that Luther in that writing speaks only of evil and hypocritical persons who nevertheless hold office (while Luther expressly writes not only of godly or evil, but also of consecrated and unconsecrated), and thinks that it remains the case that such a person who raises himself up,

or a man who is arbitrarily raised up by the congregations, is no more capable in the sacrament than an actor who imitates it on the stage; if such a pastor (who was not recognized by Pastor Grabau as legitimately called) were to speak the words of institution over the elements, nothing but "vain bread and wine" would be distributed.

Furthermore, as far as the old church orders are concerned, to which Pastor Grabau wanted to bind the Lutheran congregations for all times, Pastor Loeber asserts that although he and the Saxon pastors do not despise these old orders, no compulsion may be made out of them, as if omission of these orders were injustice and sin; for the [Formula of Concord teaches in Article X \[15\]](#) of church ceremonies that it is to do with the article of Christian liberty, "which the Holy Ghost through the mouth of the holy apostle so earnestly charged His Church to preserve" [[translated from the German text](#)]: "As soon as the commandments of man are imposed as necessary," so the Formula of Concord teaches, "the way is already prepared for idolatry, so that the commandments of man are not only kept equal to the commandments of God, but also set above them." Again, Pastor Loeber notes Luther's glorious words about this: "What is left will be taught by custom and value, only that the Word of God should be preached earnestly and faithfully in the church; for that some may desire that this whole order should be preserved is of little consequence to us, because we have said above that in this order things are done freely, without all coercion and necessity, and that it is not fitting to take Christians' consciences prisoner, either by law or by commandment. Therefore also the Scriptures do not finally order anything of these things, but lets the freedom of the spirit be certain, in his own mind according to the occasion of place, time and person," etc. — Nevertheless, in his response to this critique by Loeber, Pastor Grabau insisted on the necessity of maintaining the old church orders under all circumstances. He and the

the above-mentioned Buffalo pastors declare to the Saxon pastors: “It is wrong and sinful that you do not faithfully and seriously refer your congregations to the old, venerable orders of the Lutheran Church, and even pretend to them that the congregations are only now out of their own life, needs and activities to develop new church regulations. Although the Saxon pastors had only taken precautions to prevent Christian freedom from being damaged and the path of faith from being reversed, they had left it to Pastor Grabau to maintain the old Church constitution and the state-church orders, as much as was possible in America, Pastor Grabau nevertheless considered a draft for a church order appropriate to the local conditions as such a crime that he thought this innovation (the introduction of a congregational order) was just the same as what the Lutherans had to endure in Prussia as a result of the royal cabinet orders (*Ordres*), which introduced the "Union". — In refuting the critique, he and the other three pastors put together seventeen errors of the Saxon pastors and demanded the revocation of the new church order. “What are we supposed to do with our own stuff like this,” he exclaims, “my most heartfelt wish would be that you would come to your senses about your doings!” Finally, he also asserts that he could not consider the Saxon pastors to be genuinely Lutheran pastors, because the spirit that reigns in this critique of the pastoral letter is a lax, unchurched spirit. "The Lord have mercy on you," etc., and so on. It seems, Pastor Grabau says, that the struggle which was fought against the liberalism of the "Union" in Prussia must be repeated against the Saxons here in Germany.

Admittedly, it had to appear to be an independentistic activity if an individual congregation together with its pastor wanted to formulate its own regulation, since Pastor Grabau wanted to deny a much more important right to the Christian and the individual congregations, namely the right to examine the doctrine and, in doubtful cases, to decide for themselves what to do or not to do according to the Word of God. According to the

Lutheran Catechism, the office of the keys is the peculiar church power that Christ gave to His Church on earth. According to Pastor Grabau, the keys would be used as a mere power of the ministry in the Church of Christ, just as according to Roman teaching they come from the shrine of the heart of the pretended representative of Christ, i.e. they are a papal power. That is why Pastor Grabau and his followers rejected as heretical the teaching that the congregation has the final judgement in its own ecclesiastical affairs, and although every Christian in general can judge the doctrine, this can only be done in the right order, no single member of the church can judge the doctrine of the pastor, only the symbols and ecclesiastical courts, i.e. the ministries and synods, have to judge it, and through these the church gives its decisions. Here it must be taken into account that while the state church consistories always have secular members, so-called laymen, among their counselors, at the Buffalo synods, however, the church delegates were only considered as witnesses present at the councils, the ministerium had the right and the duty to judge for itself in its doctrine, to make regulations, and to decide in doubtful cases. That is why pastor Grabau calls out to the congregations: “You can presuppose an upright knowledge of church doctrine from your teachers”. For the same reason he also wants to limit the congregation's right to choose its pastor as much as possible, so that Pastor Loeber writes in all modesty: "The right of independence of a Christian congregation, as Luther explains by name in his open letter to the Bohemians, seems to us to be rather misunderstood and overlooked in your Pastoral Letter. However, it cannot be denied that where a congregation is in ecclesial association with recognized orthodox pastors, it must consult them when choosing a new preacher. Under other circumstances, Loeber writes, it is not wrong, but quite in accordance with God's order that a congregation should choose a preacher from its own ranks, even without the help of others in the ministry. Mistakes also occur enough in the other case on the part of the ministry in the appointment of

pastors. But where the congregation, according to the right given to it by God, entrusts the office to one, that office is nevertheless established. Only where personal hatred and separatists are involved, where altar against altar is built and teachers are gathered after people's itching ears, there arbitrary revolt is taking place. Pastor Loeber then turns to Pastor Grabau and exclaims "We also certainly believe that you, dear brother, have nothing more to desire than that our congregations should be freed more and more from the oppressive shackles of the former paternalism, and may no longer be looked upon as the people who are cursed, knowing nothing of the Law, in the most important church concerns always only dependent on human superiors, and in doing so let themselves be tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, [[Eph. 4:14](#)] but would like to get now for themselves trained minds, and use their freedom from all yokes upon consciences and from human service, dearly bought by Christ's blood." Therefore, Pastor Loeber also says, one may confidently emphasize to the congregations the true blessed freedom of a Christian man, whereby it will then certainly result that all who believe the Word are also willingly and submissively subject to human order, including their teachers and pastors, no longer in servile fear, as masters over their consciences, but in childlike gratitude as helpers of their salvation and as ambassadors in Christ's stead. — Pastor Grabau's response to these words was the accusation: "It is wrong that you turn the God-given shepherds and teachers of the Church into mere charitable friends of the congregations, who should only stand in gratitude for these benefits; this is proof that you do not have the right concept of the bright preaching ministry."

One can see from this that Pastor Grabau wanted the pastors to be regarded as superiors in authority, to whom one is obliged to obey for the sake of their own ministry! He was accustomed to say: only in the things that are not against God's Word (i.e. also in all indifferent things), one should be obedient to the pastors,

but the decision in a case of conscience, whether this and that is contrary to the Word of God or not, is up to the pastor, to the ministerium, or finally to the Synod! Although the Missourians teach that the congregation is to make its decision, which it is entitled to do, from and according to the Word of God, and the layman is not obliged to leave everything alone to the pastor's decision, Pastor Grabau nevertheless teaches of the Missourians that the congregation should disregard the judgment of the Word of God! But a shameful tyranny of conscience must arise if, in doubtful cases, all members of the congregation are to place their conscience into the pastor's conscience and give themselves up to him. This is how the papacy came into being, so that the so-called clergy said: "We have right and power alone, what we set, that is for everyone, who shall master us?!" — How easy it is for even an honest pastor to have a false, erroneous conscience, or to excommunicate an innocent person out of ignorance and the like. But if, on the other hand, the decision of the congregation does not agree with God's Word, then such a judgment is not to be respected as the voice of the true Church either, but is null and void. —

[↑] Already in the preface [[p. 5](#)], in which the Saxon pastors answer for the publication of "[Graubau's Pastoral Letter together with the writings exchanged between him and them](#)" (while they are publicly bitterly attacked and insulted in Graubau's Synodical Report of 1845), it says: these are important truths, but they are not presented to the readers in such a way that the members of the congregation should sound the alarm with the recognized truth in the Buffalo congregations, or make divisions behind the back of the pastor. "Nay, go to him with sincerity and in the fear of God, ask humble and modest questions. Seek no quarrel, but only truth, unity and peace....." There is also a word of warning to those readers who wish to misuse this book to either

be encouraged by the improper separation from the ministry, or in disorderly and sectarian choice of unfit pastors. Such, it is said, would only bring shame and heartache to the true Church and all righteous pastors!

But also the warm reminder to Pastor Grabau in the critique was quite accurate: "Permit us, dear brother in the ministry, above all, that we strive to investigate and preach the true Gospel of the free grace of God, and give God alone the glory that through His Word He wants to take His church into His almighty protection against all gates of hell even in these last perilous times. If He did not do this and did not give Spirit and power to the Word, then we ourselves would certainly not achieve anything by preaching the pure divine Word, let alone by the reputation of our ministry or by the austerity of external order. But He promised her that He would do so, that He would not leave His church, and would give her everything she needed, that He promised her, saying: 'Behold, I am with you always, until the end of the world.'"

With great patience, the pastors of the Missouri Synod worked in their congregations to bring the hearts of their hearers into obedience to the divine Word; they knew well that the Word alone is the seed of rebirth, by the power of which the children of God are brought to true and blessed freedom. Although there were also those who resisted and fought against the divine power of the Word, nevertheless a faithful congregation was soon formed under the Missouri pastoral care, which held fast to God's Word and caused those who resisted to be separated, satisfied that they could build themselves on their most holy faith and order their congregation according to God's Word. The orthodox congregation had all the more room for this freedom after it had experienced such a sifting and testing.

The splits that took place within

the Buffalo Synod were quite different. Even if an entire congregation left the association of this synod, as was the case in Watertown, Wisc. in the 1840s, Pastor Grabaus and his followers said that such a congregation no longer belonged to the church, it had become a rabble. It was noted by us above under the tenth section [[p. 184](#)] that Pastor Kindermann himself, who provisionally served this congregation, initiated Pastor Geyer's call. It was only when it was learned that Pastor Geyer agreed with the Saxon pastors regarding the doctrine of the church and the preaching ministry, that the Buffalo ministry wanted to reverse this call given by the Watertown congregation. The congregation, however, persisted in the call sent to Pastor Geyer, and the Saxon pastors had to consider such a call valid while teaching and proving from God's Word that the right to call [*Vokationsrecht*] did not rest in a single privileged class (not in the ministerial offices) but in the whole congregation. — Much more difficult were those cases where individual members of congregations separated from their pastor and from the church out of displeasure. Such a case occurred first in Milwaukee, where individual Prussian Lutherans separated and accepted a certain Klügel as their preacher. This Klügel had separated from the association of the Saxons and had been warned by the local pastors about accepting such a position in Milwaukee. So Klügel had gone to Milwaukee on his own initiative. Nonetheless, the Buffalo people wanted to blame the Missourians for Klügel's trials, and the second Buffalo Synod, meeting in 1848, declared that although Pastor Grabau had promised to hold a conference with the Saxon pastors to resolve the pending disputes, the Buffalo Synod would not be able to do so, which was to take place in the spring of 1847 at the latest, that he was nevertheless right not to be present, since the (so-called) rabble pastors Geyer and Klügel had not yet been called away from their posts (with the so-called rabble).

The Buffalo people added that Pastor Grabau was not authorized to travel to Chicago (where they wanted to do everything the Buffalo Lutherans brought up) because, apart from Senior Pastor Grabau, only Pastor Krause was invited there, which was a setback for the two other pastors: Kindermann and Rohr.

The Saxons would have thought it immodest to invite the entire Buffalo ministerium, nevertheless they would have been happy to see all the Buffalo pastors in Chicago. Pastor Grabau had already been invited to Fort Wayne for a talk in 1846, but there was a reason to invite Pastor Krause in particular to Chicago, because a large number of Lutherans, former members of Pastor Krause's congregation, had turned to the Saxon pastors with the request for an expert opinion, in which they repeatedly accused their former pastor in regard to his doctrine and life. The answer to the letter of these members of Pastor Krause's congregation was postponed as long as one hoped to get a meeting with Grabau and Krause, who had also been informed of the complaint. Pastor Grabau did not come, although he had promised from the beginning to come to a conference without any condition. He even soon declared that he would not answer the letters addressed to him by the Saxon pastors. Already in his reply against the critique, Pastor Grabau denied the Saxons' faithful Lutheran character, and declared war with the words: "God help us that we may resist your false, unchurchly spirit, if you do not repent, by virtue of our holy office, publicly and joyfully". From this he gathered the Buffalo Synod in the year 1845, which in its first synodical report also publicly declared the Saxon pastors to be false teachers, and issued a dictatorial appeal to them to recant. This happened even before a so-called rabble preacher (opposition preacher) [*Rottenprediger*] had started on the part of the Saxons or a former member of the Prussian Lutherans congregation had been accepted by them.

When Pastor Krause refused to respond to the accusations made against him, the [first convention of the Missouri Synod](#) gave its opinion (*Gutachten*) after careful examination and consideration of the facts. This went against Pastor Krause, and the Buffalo Synod gathered in 1848 was so indignant about it that in its second synodical letter it says that the pastors "Loeber, Walther and their comrades not only live in false doctrine, but one must now because they have increased in sins and become strong in iniquity despite all the enlightenment and admonition given, consider them wanton false teachers and public bold sinners who must be avoided according to God's Word until they turn over a new leaf, repent and sincerely seek reconciliation." The entire Missouri Synod is called there an "Ahab Synod", "Synod of Abominations" and so on. Loeber, Walther, etc. are already called "protectors of the rabble" [*Rottenbeschützer*] on the title of that synodical letter. According to 1 Peter 4:15 and John 10:1, the pastors Bürger, Keyl and so on are not Christian pastors, but only heads of rabble in the service of Satan. "In this temple of Babel it resounds and roars: No obedience in external church matters, for this is not necessary for salvation! — The Lord rebuke thee, Satan! We do not want that kind of freedom." — Strangely enough, after a few years, Pastor Krause was sued again by Pastor Grabau, who traveled to Wisconsin, and in view of what Krause had done, finally dismissed him as well and declared him a tyrannical hypocrite. However Grabau did not take back the abuse which he had poured out against the Missouri Synod chiefly on account of the judgment which this synod had pronounced against Krause; however Krause himself subsequently proved the Missouri Synod right, for when he asked for admission to the Missouri Synod, he confessed everything that had been accused of him, especially that he had often done unjust excommunications, and publicly abused the Missourians. Pastor Grabau, however, founded the [Informatorium](#) in July 1851 as an organ of the Buffalo Synod, in which, for example, it says: "Professor Walther and those attached to him,

are certainly heretics!” — If friends, such as Pastor Loehe, thought in good faith that it had not yet been proven that the congregations in question, which had appealed to the Missouri Synod, were rabble, if one could not at least assume that what Grabau regarded as wanton, godless protection of the rabble could have been done out of a mistaken conscience, Grabau answered already in the first volume of his *Informatorium*: "Truly, one would only have to assume such a mistaken conscience in the case of the devil himself." —

While everything was still being offered from the other side [*Missouri Synod*] to settle the dispute, which had arisen for the sake of the doctrine, Pastor Grabau continued to reject the offered hand and to regard and treat his opponents as heretics. If the pure Evangelical Lutheran doctrine itself had not been so blasphemously vilified even then, as long as there was still hope for mutual understanding, the people who were troubled in their conscience would have been directed to their pastor for the time being. Meanwhile it became more and more clear that Pastor Grabau and his ministerium often acted unjustly and papistically in the public exercise of the ban. If Pastor Grabau considered a member of the congregation to be a dangerous man if he dared to contradict him, the first opportunity was taken to declare the same to be banned; if Pastor Grabau was asked whether the ministerium, which could see about the ban, could not also pronounce an unjust ban, he replied: in such a case, however, an unjust ban must be respected; indeed, the person so affected, if he had already been undeservedly banished, should rather abstain completely from the Holy Sacrament than seek it in another congregation or synod! He said that the person so affected, if he had already been banned undeservedly, should rather be banned from the sacrament completely than seek it in another congregation or synod. But the Missourians were not so despotic and unloving. After the Buffalo people had laid such emphasis on the existing doctrinal difference that they condemned those who taught differently and thereby caused the division of the church, the Missouri Synod would have neglected its duties if it had been partly to blame for the sighs and tears of so many apparently honest

souls who in their moral distress turned to the Missourian pastors and congregations. Although Pastor Grabau refused to be heard in regard to his former congregation members, and rejected all requests to negotiate through delegates or to discuss doctrinal differences at a colloquium, the Missourians still followed the principle of not accepting a soul who had separated from the Buffalo people, or not recommending a pastor to such congregations until the Synod had been clearly convinced by reliable, irreproachable testimonies, that those who separated from Buffalo were in the most perfect right, either because they had separated themselves for the sake of conscience, because they could no longer profess the false doctrine and unjust practice of their previous pastors and had been rejected by their previous church court, or because they themselves had been banned against Christ's order and in an unjust manner by their previous pastors and had been excluded from the enjoyment of the means of grace. They were aware that such spiritually tyrannized souls should not be denied the help they had asked for, even though they were for this reason given a bad name for it here at home and in Germany; just as Pastor Grabau, through his pamphlets and on his travels, believed he had to report the "fratricidal" proceedings of the Missourians to the church. Strangely enough, he did not only use coarse insults, but also contradicted them, because while he from the beginning put the Missourian doctrine on a par with the liberalism of the Prussian Union, he nevertheless thought that for the sake of some doctrinal differences, as they exist between Buffalo and Missouri, nobody should separate from his previous synod. No one should be allowed to go over to Missouri for the sake of conscience. On the other hand, if there were unhappy people in Missouri churches who separated from them and turned to Pastor Grabau, the Buffalo people would visit and accept them into the Buffalo congregations without any inquiry with the Missourians. This is what happened in Cincinnati and elsewhere.

[↑] In vain, on the other hand, he was reproached that the practice which was so annoying to him flowed from the difference of doctrine which he himself held in the highest regard; he should therefore, according to 1 Peter 3:15, give an account of his own doctrine at a public colloquium and, if he could, refer the Missourians from God's Word and the symbols! As early as January 1847, the Lutherans at [Kirchhayn in Wisconsin](#) had urged him to convene such a meeting to resolve these disputes, and finally, in 1867, the congregations in [Humberstone, Canada](#), requested such a colloquium. Since at that time the vast majority of the former Buffalo congregations and pastors had already turned away from Pastor Grabau, and the Humberstone congregation itself was without pastors, Grabau was thought to have prevented a schism by allowing himself to hold a colloquium with Professor Walther in the midst of the local congregation. According to the success of this discussion, the congregation would then decide when they would chose a preacher. Although Pastor Grabau initially agreed to this request, he finally refused the colloquium with Professor Walther. As soon as he was informed by telegram, he declared that he owed it to the Humberstone congregation to attend such a colloquium, but Pastor Grabau sent a written statement to Humberstone that he had no more business with Prof. Walther than with the clergy in Spain. He also urged the pastors associated with him to either not answer at all to any inquiry made in regard to such persons who wanted to separate, or to send a Bible verse calling the Missourian pastors false prophets, instead of an answer to them, for example Matt. 7:15. — At the end of the fifties Pastor Grabau, in order to give the ministry more control over the church property of the congregations, set up a general building fund from which those congregations that insured their church property for permanent connection to the

Buffalo Synod, were to be supported in the construction of churches and schools. For this purpose, the Buffalo ministerium ordered a monthly tax of one cent, and the support which the individual congregations had previously given each other for such buildings was to be discontinued from that time on, in so far as the congregations concerned were to turn to the ministerium which administered the building fund in such cases. Since these monthly collections were ordered as a condition with the individual congregations, this led to divisions and very angry scenes. The Missouri pastors instructed the discontented not to separate for the sake of such a small gift; only the one thing they should do to preserve their freedom was to ask the Buffalo ministerium to admit that such a change in an indifferent matter, as made by this order, would have to be brought about by mutual agreement between the pastors and the church members! Pastor Grabau responded that he would rather die than be denied the right to make orders. He had the ministerium impose suspension and excommunication on the reluctant church leaders. As a result, several large congregations near Buffalo parted from Grabau. The Missouri pastors and their district synods once again consulted with one another and conscientiously proceeded even in the face of these violent actions of Grabau. The writer of this, who at that time was a deacon next to Pastor Grabau, once in the 1860s, when he had to look for another sheet on Pastor Grabau's desk, found an official letter from a Missourian pastor, in which he reported to the Buffalo pastor in question that seventy men had registered with the Missourians, who had, as they said, left Buffalo because of the cent per month tax [or per DeepL: 'penny-pinching'!]. He, the Missourian pastor, now asks that all those persons be named to him who should be in church discipline for the sake of the cause. "Should you," the letter concluded, "refuse to name these persons to me or do not appreciate this letter,

I shall hold you responsible on judgment day if I unconsciously administer the sacrament to some of those who are unworthy of Holy Communion.” — This letter, too, had remained unanswered; but by God's will, after some time when it was written, it would be eye-witnessed by a man [[Hochstetter himself!](#)] who until then had also blamed the Missourians for vain recklessness and a domineering desire for opposition. — [[↑](#)] More and more clearly the work which Pastor Grabau had so laboriously built up fulfilled what Pastor Wyneken, as President, judged in his [synodical address of 1852 \[p. 201-202\]](#):

"If we could and were permitted to accept the principles and the conduct of our brethren, who are hurling the grave accusation of heresy against us on account of our doctrine of Church and Ministry, and charge us with divesting the holy ministry of its divine dignity, and of catering to the carnal desires of the congregations for licence; if we could, like them, lay claim to any other power than that of the Word, then it would be easy for us to lay consciences captive, to coerce them to outward obedience, and to introduce discipline and order in a manner that would be quicker and more pleasing to the flesh. But what would be gained? We would perhaps erect a beautiful, eye-catching building, in which, however, it would not be free Christians living in God, but poor slaves who, with captive, enslaved and martyred consciences and sighing hearts, eked out their stunted existence under the pressure of a miserable human yoke, would not dare to shake off the pressure they feel, because according to their misguided consciences their souls' salvation would be bound to this slavish submission. And how long would this structure last? No longer than until the hidden displeasure took its pleasure and tore down the building and its builder. Yes! what would be gained if it stood until the end of the world? The Lord would have to consume it at the end of days with the fire of His wrath, like all things that were not built by His Spirit."

[↑] **[The fourth synodical convention](#)**

of the Missouri Synod was opened on October 2, 1850, under special circumstances, as indicated by [the synodical address of the then President, Prof. Walther](#). After recalling the trials which the Synod had suffered through the death of several faithful ministers of the Church, in particular of the sainted Pastor H. Loeber, he indicated the importance of the struggle in which the Synod had now fallen, while witnessing against the Romanizing tendency which was now appearing in the midst of the Lutheran Church, both in Germany and in America, was becoming more and more necessary and important. [[p. 117-119](#), paraphrased]

It can not be denied that the Lutheran Church is once again moving mightily after it has begun to awaken from its long sleep of death. More and more men recognized the depth of the apostasy into which rationalism had plunged the German people; many had already opened their eyes with horror that the church Union which had come into being at that time was nothing but a new fraud, whereby Satan wanted to destroy the new work of God and deprive German Christendom of the blessing of the new visitation of grace which had been given to it; some have also come to the conclusion that the only true union founded by God already exists in the Evangelical-Lutheran Church, but that every other union, made by man, is an evil distorted image with which Satan apes the barely awakened Christianity.

“But has one dealt faithfully with this God-given knowledge?” Prof. Walther continues: “Has one really returned to the faith and confession of our fathers? Except for a few witnesses of the truth, this has not happened. There are not only those who claim the right to develop the doctrine further and want to exploit it for its so-called scientific character, there are also men who do not want to stop halfway, who regret with all their hearts that the bonds of the Church are becoming increasingly loose, that the holy office is increasingly stripped of its divine dignity and that everything old is thrown away. — But what are they doing now?”

By wanting to be quite strictly Lutheran, their zeal leads them far beyond what is Lutheran, against their will and without their knowing it. In their good opinion they bring into the Church things from which a Luther once purified the Church as as of something which grievously defiled the church with great labor and a hard fight; and with the best of intentions to purify our church from accumulated rubble and filth, they put out jewels of holy doctrines and ordinances, for the achievement of which our fathers once joyfully risked goods and blood. In contrast to the abandonment of the idea of the one holy Christian Church and against the syncretism of our days, they are unmistakably returning more and more to the concept of the Church as a visible, well-organized external institution. [[as Theodore Graebner did in 1950; translated.](#)] Contrary to the contempt for the means of grace, they are again approaching the doctrine of the power of the sacraments *ex opere operato*. In contrast to the contempt for all that is old and to the rejection of all foreign authority and established church institutions, they are now again seeking to unite consciences to some human statutes and church orders. In contrast to the degradation of the office of the ministry, they fight against the important and just rights of the spiritual priesthood of all Christians as illusions of proud enthusiasts, and they deny the so-called laity the right to choose their pastors and the right to vote in synods and church courts. In this contrast, they also derive the office of the ministry from the power of ordination by preachers who declare it to be a divine order; make the office and ministry of those who are to be mere stewards of God's mysteries a special status preferred to the lay priesthood; grant to Gospel preachers a power and dominion *de jure divino* (according to divine right) even in those things which are neither commanded nor forbidden in God's Word; thus they transform the Christocracy of the congregations of the saints and the chosen, of the free, who are the Mother of us all, of Jerusalem above, into the aristocracy of a Papal State,

and finally make the power of the Word and Sacrament dependent on the office of the one who handles these means of grace.”

In the following, Prof. Walther draws attention to four important points. [[p. 119](#)] “The first one is this: this is not at all adiaphora (things indifferent), measures, customs, ceremonies and constitutional questions on which Christian wisdom decides; it is rather about doctrine, that is, about something that is not ours but God's. ... Here the apostolic exhortation is valid: ‘A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump’, Gal. 5:9. Secondly, [[p. 120](#)] it is also impossible in our synod congregations to treat different doctrines as having equal rights in these matters. If a church wanted to allow this, then it would be giving up on itself. Thirdly, that the doctrines at issue here do not belong to those which have not yet been discussed in the Church, but rather to those which not only the most enlightened scholars of God have clearly set forth in their private writings in accordance with the Word of God, but on which the whole Church has also made her confession in her public symbols. Yes, the whole struggle of the Reformation era was actually about these doctrines. The fourth thing Prof. Walther reminds us of is that, although these points in dispute do not concern fundamental articles of the Christian faith, and we do not want to belittle those who err in them, they are nevertheless so closely connected with the fundamental articles of our Christian faith that the deviations in their conclusions must at last necessarily overturn the foundation for the faith. —

[↑] Already the emphasis of the first of these points disproves the objection raised by R. Hoffmann and others in Germany in view of the protracted dispute between Pastor Grabau and the Missouri Synod over the doctrine of the Church. R. Hoffmann writes: “Although the greater right lies with Missouri, the democratic Missouri constitution belongs to the

the dark side of Missouri; however, it is not just a constitutional question that has created the rift between the Missouri and Buffalo Synods. The differences between these two or between the real Old Lutherans and today's neo-Lutheran Romanists are much deeper, they are far-reaching doctrinal differences! It is a question of: With whom is the spiritual power, the power of the Keys that Christ has given to His Church on earth, the power of the Keys that is inherent in all church governance? Grabau, as pointed out above, attributed it exclusively to the ordained ministry (*Lehrstand*), which he contrasted with the household (*Hausstand*), as if the members of the household, when they hear the Word of God, and the saved, were the same. The members of the household, when they hear God's Word and receive the sacraments, may only live by the grace of the ordained pastor. According to this doctrine, the congregation itself had only the honor of obeying, which even the Roman Jesuits still leave to the laity. In accordance with his teaching, Grabau logically claimed that even a person who was undeservedly excommunicated had no right to turn to another orthodox church, for since Grabau made the true existence of the sacrament dependent on the right call of the pastor, to which many requirements belonged, he considered such a pastor a rabble-priest who wanted to administer the Holy Sacrament to a member of a rabble. Such a pastor would destroy the church and rob the Grabau church government of the souls that belong to it! — According to the doctrine of the holy Apostles, they refuse to be intermediaries between Christ and the congregations; “Therefore let no man glory in men,” St. Paul exclaims, “for all things are yours,... And ye are Christ's!” [1 Cor. 3:21, 23] The faithful are thus directly attached to Christ the Head, and even the treasures of grace which the Apostles administer and communicate through their ministry are taken from the treasure of the believers, which is why the orthodox pastors of God and of the Church are servants, just as the Pope claims to be the only giver of spiritual power and grace, and in fact claims: “Everything belongs to me and to the ordained priests who are my

creatures, nothing belongs to you laymen, so it was said of Grabau and his ministry, spiritual power belongs to us, and he to whom we refuse absolution and the holy sacrament may not seek it anywhere else. Quite logically in his mind, the previous Pope Pius IX wrote to the German Emperor ten years ago: "All that is baptized belongs to me". Similarly, Pastor Grabau included all Lutherans whom he recognized as such in his association. He declared that the visible Lutheran Church is the only one to be saved, and claimed that those excommunicated by him, even if they had already converted to Missouri and been expelled from the Buffalo Synod, belonged to him, and that he would sue, for this reason, the Missourian pastors who had stolen his own, on the Last Day. — Since Pastor Grabau hereafter used his Papist doctrine of the Church and office of the Keys in favor of his hierarchical practice, and, e.g.

excommunicated those who contradicted him in such matters, one must be surprised that even those who completely approved of Pastor Walther's actions against Stephan — not only in regard to the annoying way of life, but also to the Stephanist false doctrine — still think that the Missourians had acted hastily, in that they finally (after a proper, thorough investigation of the individual cases) received and accepted those who separated from the Buffalo Synod as a result of the Romanizing Buffalo doctrine and the tyrannical practice that followed, and who were usually expelled from the Buffalo Synod, as already noted above. It was just now revealed that Prof. Walther and the Saxon pastors had not yet fulfilled their task by overcoming Stephan's heresy and tyranny. Should not the same man, of whom R. Hoffmann writes that he had been called by God to redeem the Stephanists from their madness, should not the same man have been right to fight the Buffalo hierarchy, which is even more finely woven? Pastor Loehe's fear of an American church democracy was also unfounded, the

the Missouri Synod did not want to learn from the sects, which usually also put Christianity into a legal constitutional form and into several favorite statutes; but on the Missouri side one was forced to confront also those theologians in Germany who wanted to ward off the overthrow of the old orders in church and state by raising human authorities and orders to the throne and forgetting about the only remedy of which it is called [Wisdom of Solomon 16:12](#): "For it was neither herb, nor mollifying plaister, that restored them to health: but thy word, O Lord." Conditions may have their needs according to the times or the country in which one lives, and there are different constitutions that the Lutheran Church can support, but the truth is always only one, and doctrine must not be modeled on human desires and conditions, but rather on the pure doctrine of the divine Word.

Already at this Fourth Synodal Convention Prof. Walther was asked to write a treatise, in which the true doctrines of Church and Ministry were to be presented, to counter the many false allegations and accusations contained in the second Grabau Synod Letter. [[See here, p. 37](#)]

[↑] The submission and acceptance of the book on the Church and the holy Office of the Ministry.

At the [fifth meeting of the Synod held in Milwaukee in 1851](#), [[German text](#); [English translation](#)] Prof. Walther accordingly presented the draft of this book to the Synod. The book bears the title: *[The Voice of our Church on the Question of Church and Ministry. A collection of testimonies on this question from the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and other states, as a testimony of their faith in defense against the attacks of Pastor Grabau in Buffalo, N.A., presented by C.F.W. Walther, theol. professor of St. Louis and pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran congregation there.](#)*

A clear insight into this book can be aided by the Preliminary Remarks preceding it.

Since especially in Germany some people [[Loeche, etc.](#)] were of the opinion that the doctrines of the Church and the holy Office of the Ministry were still an “open question” about which the Church had not yet spoken, as if these doctrines had only now to be issued or “further developed”, Prof. Walther, when writing this book, had made it his task to show that the great decisive struggle of the Reformation, which our Church fought against the papacy in the 16th century, was already about these doctrines. The pure doctrine in regard to these topics is therefore already an achievement of the Lutheran Reformation and whoever wants to exploit this doctrine must first sit down again at the feet of [Luther](#). Therefore, in the questions that have now become controversial, the voice of our Church should be heard and appreciated, as it is contained in the public Confessions, in Luther's writings, and in the private writings of the oldest Lutheran teachers that are linked to Luther. — The book contains nine theses (doctrinal statements) about the Church and then in the second part ten theses about holy preaching Ministry. Under each thesis there is: 1) the basis and proof from God's Word; 2) the testimonies of the church in the private writings of its teachers. [**NB: Kramer inserts for #2 above “Testimonies of the church in her public Confessions”**] It can be seen that not only is a certain order of precedence maintained, but that a distinction is made between the basis and proof given by the Word of God alone and the testimonies of the Church, especially of her individual teachers. Although some newer theologians thought that the Missouriians were too fond of these old dogmatists, it was nevertheless necessary to let these testimonies follow on from the proof that the Missouri Synod did not teach anything new, neither in substance nor in expression, even when it emphasized the glory of the Church of the Saints and the freedom and majesty of the Christian man. This was especially necessary for the sake of those who wanted to pass off their hyper-Lutheran way of seeing the Lutheran Church

as the church (in which the communion of saints were decided) as the only legitimate Lutheranism, when in doing so they were deviating from Luther's doctrines. The God-appointed reformer Luther must know best what Lutheran is, so this book contains plenty of evidence from Luther's writings. Prof. Walther writes in the introduction: “Not because we believed in him, but because we recognized that the doctrine he preached was not his doctrine, but the pure Word of the eternal God, we have been careful to give particularly rich extracts from Luther's writings.” — In eight sessions, the author of the book of *Church and Ministry* presented the individual theses and their justification to the Synod, to each of which the Synod gave its approval. The hearts of all the synodical members were filled with great joy at the Scripturalness, clarity and sweetness of this genuinely evangelical doctrine, and the peace of the Spirit of God proved to be the fruit of the true certainty of faith.

Nowhere in this book, which among other things is named by Superintendent [Dr. A. Brömel](#) as an important and decisive one through its testimonies, is there a direct polemic. Pastor Grabau's name is only mentioned on the title page, because the author takes a fundamental approach and lays one stone upon another in strict order. The cornerstone on which the other theses are based is the confession of the eternally firm truth that the Church is the congregation of true believers and saints, invisible by nature because Christ dwells invisibly in the hearts of believers, but the Church is the body of Christ, to which no unborn child, no hypocrite, no godless one, no heretic belongs. But the presence of the Church in the pure preaching of the Word and the Scriptural administration of the holy sacraments becomes evident.. This essentially invisible Church is the true owner and bearer of all heavenly goods, rights, offices and powers which Christ gave to His Church. This church therefore also directly possesses the Keys [[Kramer: “independently of human mediators”](#)]. It would also be contrary to the basic doctrine of justification

by faith in Christ alone if officials were allowed to present themselves as mediators between God and the believers; indirectly, however, since the times of the Apostles, pastors by God have been called by the congregations. The pastor as the appointed steward over God's secrets, who is entrusted with the public administration of the ministry, and the congregation as the bride of Christ, are both bound to the Word of Christ the heavenly Bridegroom, therefore the Word of God alone is to reign, as Christ the Lord said: "One (only) is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren." (Matt. 23:8).

[↑] In the theses dealing with the holy preaching office, it is first of all proved that the spiritual priesthood, which all true believing Christians have, and the preaching office or pastoral office according to the Word of God are not one and the same; that a common Christian, because he is a spiritual priest, is not yet a pastor, and again a pastor, because he holds the public ministry of preaching, is not yet a priest; that neither the spiritual priesthood is a public office in the Church, nor the public ministry of preaching a particular rank different from the state of Christians, but that this is a ministry of service (but ordered by Christ himself in the establishment of the apostolic office); that furthermore pastors publicly administer the offices in the name of the congregation which belong originally to the Church, as the true royal priestly lineage, and thus every truly believing Christian has. — The [VI](#) and [VII](#) Theses then demonstrates that the public ministry of preaching, though not one and the same as the spiritual priesthood, is nevertheless the fruit of the latter, "rooting" itself in it, as the ancient teachers say, because the one who becomes a minister of the Church, while not becoming a priest (but rather being removed from the band of priests), is the Christian priest who administers holy offices (Rom 15:16). For this reason, the pastors are given their ministry and their authority by God through the congregations and through their

call prescribed by God, and so the ministry of preaching, by its very nature, can be nothing other than the authority conferred by God through the congregations, as holders of the priesthood and all church authority, to exercise the rights of the spiritual priesthood in the public office in the name of the congregation.

The proofs of this and the testimonies follow by name under [Thesis VII](#), as [Luther](#) writes in the name of all faithful Lutherans: "We firmly insist that there is no other Word of God, only that which is offered to all Christians to preach", — — — that no one should judge the doctrine, except only the Christian. These are but the priestly and royal offices. [Thesis VIII](#) reads: "The office of the ministry is the highest office in the Church, from which all other Church offices flow. [Thesis IX](#): The office of the ministry is worthy of reverence and unconditional obedience when the pastor leads by God's Word. But the pastor has no dominion in the church; he has no right, therefore, to make new laws, to arbitrarily establish the meanings and ceremonies in the church, and to impose and exercise excommunication [[or the ban](#)] alone without the prior knowledge of the whole church. [Thesis X](#): Although the ministry of preaching, according to divine right, includes the office of judging doctrine, the laity also have the right to do so; hence they also have a seat and vote in the church courts and councils with the pastors. — As clearly and unambiguously as the above confessional doctrines of the Church and the Ministry are founded and testified, they are still subject to many objections on the part of Romanizing theologians in America and in Germany.

In the first place, it was objected that one could not see how it was in the power of Christians to give away and transfer their spiritual priesthood. However, this does not take into account the fact that the ecclesiastical office is only the service through which the public exercise of the rights of the spiritual priesthood according to divine order

is transferred to those who are recognized as capable of teaching publicly. The duty to teach is and remains a basic spiritual right of every Christian, just as it is in the common life, e.g. in the state system, the public exercise of a right is not granted to each and every one in his own person, so also, by virtue of the divine institution of the ministry of preaching, from the very beginning of the New Testament, through the separation of the apostles, this order is established in which the ministries of the spiritual priesthood (as: baptism, preaching, etc.) are publicly administered in behalf of the congregation and serve to edify the body of Christ. The believing congregations retain their spiritual priesthood, just as, to paraphrase, a woman landowner retains ownership of her property if she appoints a caretaker in accordance with the commands of her lord and husband, who, in her and the lord's name, provides the children and the servants of the house with what belongs to them and supervises them; the housewife is not thereby released from her power. — As surely as the believing Church has power and command everywhere to carry out and continue the sacred ministry of preaching out into the world as a public ministry of words, so surely she has the power to entrust the administration of this ministry to those whom God gives as His gifts *) and to use the pastor as an instrument.

*) Although the Missouri Synod did not make the expression “übertragen” [[transferred](#)] into a shibboleth, it is nevertheless noted that this expression has not only been applied today, but that such Latin words are used by [M. Chemnitz](#), [Polykarp Leyser](#), [Hülsemann](#) and others, which are best reproduced with “übertragen”. Also the opponents of the “theory of transference” need the word “transfer” themselves. For that is not at all the question whether the office is transferred at all, but: by whom it is done and who has the right to do it. When St. Paul writes 2 Cor. 2:10 I forgive this in Christ's place for your sake, it can only mean: In your place! So the apostle also absolves “for the sake of the congregation”, “On this,” Walther writes in the “[Foreword](#)” to *Lehre und Wehre*, [1876 \[p. 66, footnote\]](#), “the newer theologians are horrified. ‘We are to administer our office by citizens and farmers?’ they say contemptuously. To be called royal Prussian or royal Bavarian priests, that is their

Originally, it is the Holy Spirit Himself who moves the hearts of believers and is active in the life of fellowship of Christians, which is why it is also said of the pastors called indirectly (namely by the congregations): “the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers” [[Luther: bishops](#)]. (Acts 20:28).

Secondly, until the most recent times (e.g. on the part of [W. Rohnert](#)), the doctrines of the holy ministry, which are contained in the above-mentioned book *Church and Ministry*, are said to be equal to the doctrines of the late Professor [Hoefling](#) of Erlangen, who taught that the pastoral office did not exist according to divine right, but belonged in the realm of human church and service regulations, if it had to be created with inner necessity. On the other hand, already in [Thesis II](#) in that book it reads: “The preaching office or pastoral ministry is not a human ordinance, but an office founded by God himself.” The proof from God's Word begins there with the words: “That the holy ministry is not a human order, not an ecclesiastical institution, but a work of divine wisdom, a foundation of God himself, is illuminated 1) from the prophecies of the prophets that God Himself would give shepherds and teachers to the Church of the New Covenant, Psalm 68:12; Jer. 3:15; Joel 2:23. 2) from the call of the holy apostle to the teaching ministry through the Son of God according to Matt. 10:28, 18-20; Luke 9:1-10; Mark 16:15; Joh. 20:21-23, 21, 15-17 (“Feed my sheep”). 3) from all those passages in which even those indirectly called are presented as being called by God. Acts 2:28; 1 Cor. 12:28-29; Eph. 4:11. Therefore 4) the holy Apostles join the indirectly (mediately) called ministers of the church as their fellow ministers”.

glory. How blind are they that they seek their glory in reproach and do not realize what a great honor it is to administer the office on behalf of Christians. There are no greater people in the world than Christians; angels serve them, heaven is opened above them, God descends upon them, they are clothed with the priestly adornment of Christ's righteousness.”

— — — From this follows testimonies of the Church. — The travel report that follows in the next chapter (Chapter VIII) also contains a note of the disputation that Prof. Walther had with Hoefling in Erlangen because of his erroneous theory of the Ministry. —

Thirdly, although it is certainly in accordance with Christian wisdom and love that an individual congregation, for example, when it has to elect a pastor, should seek advice from close pastors or from synodical officials, if any, it would nevertheless be contrary to the freedom of the Christian man and the autonomy of the congregation if it were to be placed under the law and under the authority of a higher or, as some express it, a government of the church as a whole. Since in the entire New Testament there is no establishment or foundation of a special church government in contrast to the office that preaches reconciliation, the Romanizing Lutherans referred to the historical development which had led to regional bishops and to the present consistories even within the regional churches. The latter at present also want to govern from their own power, while Luther only wanted to see advisory representatives of the church in the consistories, and lamented the political rule which they gradually exercised so severely that he exclaimed: “We must tear up the consistories, because in short we want neither the jurists nor the Pope in them.” — Although the Holy Spirit is certainly not bound to a special doctrinal position or supervisory office, as the Breslau High Council of Churches claims to have by divine right, the statutes of the Roman Church and of the Episcopal Church are so common that in Germany, in particular, for apparent reasons of utility, namely to prevent the infiltration of mob democracy and divisions *), the preaching office is to be derived from

*) The Breslau Supreme Consistory, which used to represent the entire separated Lutheran Church in Prussia, has caused a split in that it wants to be a supervisory body according to divine right.

and made dependent on a special power above the congregations. Pastor Loehe taught that the office first creates the church, only those who possess this office can transfer it to others, as his [*Three Books About the Church* \[*Drei Bücher von der Kirche*\]](#) show. Whoever then wants to derive the pastoral office from an episcopal succession is obliged to finally recognize the Pope as the supreme dignitary and purveyor of the office, even though Luther asserted the entire right to church reformation by opposing the Pope and his ordained mass priests with the spiritual priesthood of true Christians, in which the scriptural preaching office has its seat. Others want to avoid this episcopal succession mentioned above by placing a high church authority composed of pastor, congregation and church government as a representative of the whole Church, above the congregations and accordingly teaching that the preacher is not the servant of his congregation but the servant of the Church in the individual congregation! At all times when and where a preacher is elected, or where, in an emergency, a lay Christian gives baptism or absolution, this may only be done with the consent of the universal Church. — The most important thing here is the fact that the entire New Testament knows no difference between church and congregation, that the Lord Christ, in the stages of the exhortation which He demands, gives the visible congregation, as it exists in every place where Christians are, the highest and final judgment, according to Matt. 18:17. Even there He also says: “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them,” [[Matt. 18:20](#)] and so He hereby gives the same spiritual power to the smallest part of the church, which may have a large particular church, no matter how large it is, no matter how many church members are gathered together. “Wherever the Church is, there is the authority [command] to administer the Gospel. Therefore it is necessary for the Church to retain the authority to call, elect, and ordain ministers. And this authority is a gift which in reality is given to the Church, which no human power can wrest from the Church.” So the Smalcald Articles [[*Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, §67*\]](#) confess, which know nothing of an organized total church, with which one wants to establish spiritual authority

over the congregations today, as if the Christian had to come to salvation not only by faith in Christianity, but also by the obedience to his church superiors which is necessary for the time being. Although faith is generated by the Word of God, neither the pastoral office nor any ecclesiastical government is a condition of faith, or a means of grace besides the Word! Rather, it must always be: “**I believe, therefore I speak;**” [2 Corinthians 4:13] even the Apostles were believers before they were sent out as Apostles, so the preaching ministry grows out of the congregation of believers, even if (in special circumstances) it were small. It is not, therefore, as Pastor Loehe said, that the pastoral office is always first and that this is what creates the congregation. In contrast to the erroneous opinion that only the church as a whole has the Keys and thus the office of the Gospel, Professor Walther also refers to the Smalcald Articles and the passage of Matt. 18:20 and teaches [p. 318]: “Our Church confesses here that the whole Church, that is, not only as a large, structured [*gegliedertes*, or *divided*] whole, but also it again and again in all its smallest parts has the Keys and thus the office of the Gospel — just as the same image that appears in the whole mirror, also appears again in every fragment of it, even when the mirror would also be smashed into a thousand pieces — and that the church therefore has the right to elect and ordain ministers of the church [*Kirchendiener*].” When it is further stated in the Smalcald Articles [[Treatise, Tr. 67](#)]: “Hence, wherever there is a true church, the right to elect and ordain ministers necessarily exists. Just as in a case of necessity even a layman absolves, and becomes the minister and pastor of another; as Augustine narrates” etc., this proof also shows that the spiritual power of the Keys is with the whole church, and if there were only two or three, yes, that originally every believing Christian has the right to administer the means of grace, otherwise necessity [*or emergency*] alone could not give him this right. Hence Luther already in the writing

to the nobility of the German nation [[“To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation”](#), *AE* 44, p. 128, *StL* 10, 271, 9]: “That is why in cases of necessity anyone can baptize and give absolution. This would be impossible if we were not all priests!”

[↑] Although it seemed at the outbreak of the doctrinal dispute concerning the church and the holy ministry that the Missouri Synod, which at that time was not yet large, would now also be abandoned by its previous friends in Germany, what Pastor Wyneken, who was elected President at that Synod in 1851, said afterwards with the following words was nevertheless also fulfilled under this struggle: “The more the enemy seeks to darken this light, the brighter, clearer and more full of blessing it will shine into the lands and penetrate with its living power into those hearts that love the light more than darkness.”

VIII. [^](#)

[The delegation to Germany \(217\)](#), [[Loehe’s first public comments on meeting \(218\)](#);] and [the address of the two delegates Walther and Wyneken to the fellow members of faith there \(219-230\)](#). [[Objections to congregational rights answered \(222\)](#); [Sad state of German churches \(224\)](#); [hindrances to American blessings \(229\)](#); [meeting with Guericke, against Romanizing \(232\)](#); [meeting with Harless \(234\)](#)] [The Open Letters of the Leipzig and Fuerth Conferences and the Breslau High Consistory](#). [[Leipzig \(236\)](#); [Grabau at Leipzig \(237\)](#); [Wyneken’s Response to Leipzig \(241\)](#); [Grabau before Fuerth Conf. \(243\)](#); [Some Germans praise Walther’s Church and Ministry \(245\)](#); ; [The decline of the Buffalo Synod \[Grabau hardens against counsel \(249\)](#); [Grabau resigns \(254\)](#)] and [the strong increase of the Missouri Synod. \(256\)](#) [^](#)

[↑] Since the prevailing doctrinal controversy was about very important truths which, if they were recognized correctly, could also save the Lutheran Church in Germany from imminent disruption, it was finally decided at the [fifth synodical assembly \[1851\]](#), at the request of Dr. Sihler and others, that the Synod should send its own delegation to Germany, whose immediate purpose should be to gain an understanding with Pastor [Loehe](#) and other like-minded people. It was hoped thereby to also

dispel some of the misconceptions and prejudices that had spread about Missouri doctrine and practice there. It was also made possible by this to bring the book *Church and Ministry* [*Kirche und Amt*] into print in Germany. [Not in St. Louis] Here Prof. Walther, who was chosen for this delegation along with President Wyneken, diligently held discussions with Dr. Harless in Leipzig, Prof. Guerike in Halle, and other theologians, while he was getting his book *Church and Ministry* into print and published by A. Deichert in Erlangen. The book went through its third edition already in 1875. After Prof. Walther and President Wyneken had been chosen as delegates to Germany, it was necessary to find substitutes for them while they were away; both were located in St. Louis, because Pastor Wyneken had also been sent from Baltimore to the Trinity Church in St. Louis. Dr. [Sihler](#), until now vice president of the Synod, was asked to fill at the same time the vacancy at the pastorate of the Trinity Church.

[↑] The delegates of the Missouri Synod had embarked on August 27, 1851 in New York, and wanted above all to prevent the break that threatened between Pastor Loehe and the Missouri Synod. When they arrived in Germany in the autumn of the same year, Pastor Loehe dedicated a special memorial issue of his paper to this visit, in which he reports among other things the following: Amid the prayers and blessings of the Synod of Missouri, Ohio and other States gathered in Milwaukee, the previous president, Prof. Walther, and the current president, Pastor Wyneken, crossed the sea from St. Louis. When they arrived in Hamburg on September 12, they met, by God's wonderful providence, some outgoing emissaries of our love, who also were leading quite a few [Franconians](#) to the colonies in Michigan.

The two presidents were preceded by wonderful letters, e.g. from our friend Sihler, which, the more they went into the doctrine of the Ministry, the more we (with Loehe and Wucherer) were able to see that our mutual convictions

were in genuine Lutheran kinship, but that misunderstandings prevailed.

Now we have seen the brothers face to face, spoken, considered what was said, and we may well say that our hopes for peace have not betrayed us. When we had been walking towards each other for a while in the talks, we came together and we did so in peace. We are one in the recognition of a divine pastoral ministry; and the practice of our American brothers is, according to all we can see, so well and good that we are happy to hand over our children to these hands and no other! All the rest will come to pass, we often found that we were basically in agreement.

At the same time, Pastor Loehe regrets “that in the behavior of Pastor Grabau in Buffalo, in the way he treats the Missouri Synod in his new *Pastoral Letter* [*Hirtenbrief*] and here and there in his periodical (*Kirchliches Informatorium*), which we have appreciated”, there is so little effort to come to an agreement with our brothers. — He writes that although the brothers of Missouri did not ask him (Loehe) with one syllable, he must nevertheless declare that he, with all respect for Pastor Grabau, with all willingness to understand him, must nevertheless consider it right to stand more on the side of the brothers of Missouri, as far as he has insight into it. Finally, he reserved the right of freedom of his conduct, but it was his determined will to work with these brothers and through them, as far as they themselves consider it good, for other parts of America; to the best of his knowledge and belief, he would always promote the real work of these brothers in their Synod.

[↑] Pastor Loehe proved the latter already by including the "Address to the fellow members in the faith in Germany", which the delegates Walther and Wyneken issued during their stay there, in Nos. 1-3 of the 1852 volume of his

Mitteilungen and by agreeing to receive gifts for the college building in St. Louis by joyfully joining the challenge and the request related to it, with which that address ends.

This address ties into the fact that the appeal which Pastor Wyneken had issued nine years earlier in Germany [see [p. 99](#)], was not in vain. Just as it could not have been otherwise according to 1 Cor. 12:26, so the sorrow of those who suffered on the other side of the ocean was felt; “to the glory of the Lord, in defiance of the devil, and to the intimate joy of all Christian hearts, help has been given to us, our strength has been stimulated; with the Bavarians at the forefront, Saxony, Hanover, Mecklenburg, and even the brothers living far away in the Russian Baltic provinces have rushed to us. We can and must confess that the Lord has done great things for us, we are glad of it, the name of the Lord be praised!”

It is reported here [[by Loehle](#)] how the brethren sent to America, starting in the year 1842 onwards, did not find what they were looking for in the synods they found there. Just as those brothers had found what they were looking for there, so too the brothers who had been alone in and around St. Louis for some time had let their groaning rise up to the Lord and Head of His Church. In the first part of that address, it is said that they had, by God's grace, returned from their former separatist and Romanizing aberrations to the good way of our Church from the heart after serious purifying inner and outer tribulations. And the Lord, who hears the cries of the wretched and turns to the sighs of the abandoned, heard the prayer of his servants here too; for a testimony of the sincere return to the Lutheran Church, the Saxon brothers had issued a publication, the *Der Lutheraner*, and this had become the means of bringing together the scattered, faithful Lutheran pastors. — It is then reported how, trusting in the almighty and true God and Lord, they met with congregational delegates on April 24, 1847 in Chicago for a Lutheran synod, which was the banner of the pure

confession as laid down by the fathers in the symbolic books, freshly and joyfully planted and unfolded in the distant West, to gather the scattered members of the Church around this banner, and for the glory of their heavenly King and His almighty grace to strike new wounds and win new victories against the prince of this world. — At that time there were 22 pastors, some of whom met with congregations, but now (after four years) the Synod counts over eighty pastors and twelve teachers who, in the most intimate harmony of doctrine and heart and in communion with young and old, bear witness to the divine truth for salvation — under manifold great hardships and bitter struggles, one victory after another, so that in the cities, forests and prairies everywhere congregations are becoming more and more solidly grounded in truth, and are joyfully springing up in the certainty of their eternal salvation. Through their lives, their zeal for the Kingdom of God, and through the sacrifices they make for it, often in great poverty and meagerness, these congregations prove that the Gospel has indeed proved itself to be a force of God for the salvation in their hearts. — Confidence in our Synod is growing daily on the part of the congregations, which are always asking for more pastors than we are unfortunately able to send them for lack of teachers, and even the synods, some of which up to now have even been hostile to us, cannot escape the influence of the truth we know, so much so that the position we occupy not only commands their respect, but also pushes them more and more to the foundation of our confessions. Two theological seminaries, at Fort Wayne and St. Louis, the latter connected with a secondary school, are constantly bringing new fighters into the field, some of whom came over from Germany in a Christian zeal of love, and some of whom are gathered from the American congregations.

Your hearts, dear German brothers, must surge with joy and intimate thanks toward the Lord, when you see that your gifts of love have not been in vain and that the Lord has not

only accepted your sacrifices of thanksgiving, but has also blessed them so, that in the midst of the swarm of deceptive sects and the racket of atheistic rabble, the glory of His name in the confession of the full divine truth has spread beyond the sea, but also His power has been manifested to many thousands of souls, whom He has gathered anew into His holy Church for their salvation which, although the figure, still seemingly contemptuous to the world, nevertheless represents by the vibrant life that is manifested in many congregations, for those who seek the saving truth in simplicity, a city set on a hill [[Matt. 5:14](#)], and cannot remain hidden there, but proves to be a firm refuge, where souls eager for salvation flee from the terrible turmoil of this last afflicted time, and under the wings of the Almighty can take refuge and trust joyfully.

[↑] But here doubts will stir up in some hearts that shake their heads and say: “How can you speak of your fellowship as a refuge shining brightly into the land in today’s ecclesiastical turmoil, when it is well known that Babylonian confusion prevails over there in America and among you, especially in your congregations and communities, and that according to your own teaching and the constitution and practice based on it, it must prevail, if not, as is often the case, practice is better than theory. For we have heard that you hold strictly to the teachings of the symbolic books, and that you are to persist in struggle and strife and tolerate much blasphemy. But we are no less conscious of the fact that, on the whole, the pastors are a plaything of the congregations, who often in unbridled ferocity assert their supposed rights, which have been forced from them by the conditions prevailing there and which you have granted, albeit reluctantly, and who call and depose you at will, so that nowhere are stable conditions formed, but everything is in a state of constant fluctuation. Quickly, as soon a church comes into being, it disappears again. No sooner is a relationship established between congregation and pastor

than it is dissolved by the arbitrariness of the unstable, freedom-swilling mob, so that the preacher can count more on the wandering life of a missionary than that of a settled pastor. How is it possible that a healthy congregational life can develop and endure in such fluctuating confused conditions? [[Cp. to Rast and his “Demagogue” essay.](#)]

We would prefer to answer: “Come over, see and examine for yourselves, and then judge whether you do not like this active, joyful life, founded on the Word of God and flowing from it, this so lively and yet regulated according to firm, eternal principles, moving within divine boundaries, if you are at all delighted and pleased with the life and activity of Christian freedom in love.” But since for most of the beloved readers such a coming over and looking lies outside the realm of possibility, they must be content with another answer.

Thank God it is completely different than what you imagine it to be, and far better for it. It is true that what the Lord says to the apostles also applies to us: “I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves” [[Matt. 10:16](#)] — there is much struggle and need, especially at the beginning, in congregations that are to be newly founded. The wild licentiousness of the God-adverse old Adam often breaks loose and breaks through the barriers of divine restraint. There, as here, the natural man does not want to and cannot submit to the divine Word, and since we pastors over there have neither the desire nor the power to feed the flocks with the clubs of the police and to hold them together with difficulty by coercive laws of a high authority, we must put up with it, to have the apostolic walking staff at hand, to shake the dust from our feet and to move on when the obduracy of the congregations is revealed in the determined opposition to God's Word and His holy ordinances, and God's Word commands us to go ourselves, even when forcible expulsion does not take place. [[Cp. to Walther who often counseled to wait to be forced out.](#)] But these very struggles of the pastors in new congregations, which now and again

end with their expulsion, should in themselves give you a sure guarantee that we will not degrade ourselves to be servants of men, although they are at the same time a sure proof of [[↑](#)] the sad state of the congregations on this side of the ocean, which (and no other) provide us with the material from which we must build our congregations on the other side of the ocean. If it had not been for the fact that rationalist pastors had sown the seeds of rationalism for so many years, if there had not been such a terrifying ignorance of doctrine, such a complete lack of knowledge of any church discipline, however small, it would no longer be the secular police bailiff in Germany with its civil penalties, rather than the Christian pastor with his evangelical discipline, who also rules in church life and suffocates all Christian, church consciousness, so the people could not and would not, when they come over, consider the doctrine and discipline of our Lutheran Church to be something foreign to their conscience, and against which they would have to defend themselves. The reason for the above-mentioned phenomena in America is not to be found in our doctrine and the constitution based on it, not in the conditions there to which we would have to adjust for the sake of a little piece of bread contrary to God's Word and ordinance; but the reason is to be sought in the indescribably wretched condition of our people, who are unaccustomed to discipline in doctrine and life, and do not want to bow to the Word of the Almighty God, which the servants of the Word cannot and must not give anything away.

It is true, we do not know any sacred, consecrated, order of priests above the common estate of Christian; we dare not deprive the Bride of Christ of her adornment and the household honor of her dominion, and to claim them for us and thus rule over the people of the Most High God, to whom even with the keys all dominion and power over all the treasures, goods and offices of the Church has been given by her Lord and heavenly Bridegroom. We know that we are but servants, stewards and ambassadors of Christ, to whom only

in the name and on behalf of Christ and his congregations, the public administration of these offices, goods and gifts is entrusted by a regular call. It is our desire and joy to make our congregations aware of the high dignity and glory of their spiritual priesthood, and to encourage them through thorough instruction to know and diligently exercise the rights and duties of their glorious vocation; and we are quite content to be helpers of their joy and guardians of their freedom which was dearly acquired by Christ, to teach and warn them with all due care not to fall again under the shameful yoke of a priesthood, since they themselves have been purchased by the blood of Christ to their God as kings and priests.

But just as firmly and decidedly we teach from and according to the Word of God that the office of pastor and preacher is appointed by the Lord Himself, whose holders, as representatives of Christ, the congregations owe absolute obedience in all things, honor and love as commanded by God, and do not suffer the slightest interference with the rights of the office on the part of the congregation, since it is not ours but that of our Lord and King.

In our country the pastor does not rule over the people, nor the people over the pastor, but both are ruled by God's Word, and by this alone, and the obedience is not that of a legalistic, slavish heart, but that of a evangelical, childlike heart, which is broken by the Law in its defiant self-will, and is drawn by the sweet Gospel into the will of its heavenly Father through the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and so becomes more and more completely one with Him.

Therefore, thank God, in our more advanced congregations there is the sweet appearance that they watch with the same jealousy over the safeguarding of freedom and the rights of the ministry as the pastors watch over those of the congregations, who are loved and honoured all the more as fathers, teachers and shepherds, the less they want to be dreaded and feared as discipliners and masters.

So confidently dismiss the sad picture of our congregations which may have taken root in your heart, according to which everything is topsy-turvey, where the pastors and the shepherds are hired out every year and then, at the pleasure of the congregations, are driven away and driven out again, and instead of an orderly congregational life and conditions regulated according to God's Word and respected in mutual love and devotion, there is a desolate confusion, a continuous dispute of the pastors' presumption against the congregations contrary to Scripture, and of the congregations against the pastors, and where that part wins and asserts dominion which has the greatest impudence, rawness and shrewdness.

In other synods, but not in ours, the abomination of annual hiring and deposing prevails. Our congregations know, or at least learn, that the ministry of the Gospel, as well as the call into it, is the same for the whole congregation, i.e. that is, the people and the ministerium, but that the one who is called to the office, and indeed through the congregation, is appointed to the office by Christ himself, and no congregation has the right to remove him from the office until he has made himself unworthy of it through persistently false doctrine or unchristian life, despite all previous admonition, that is, until he has received his leave from the Lord Himself according to the Word of God, which the congregation must now pronounce and carry out. Of course, the conditions prevailing in Germany must not be taken as a standard against our own.

In Germany, conditions that have once come to pass are not so easily overturned, here at least new ones are formed in most cases, where it is all the easier to set up and follow God's Word as the norm for formation, since apart from the usual obstacles that flesh, world and devil throw in the way of the kingdom of God, there is nothing to be found in the external conditions that could prevent congregations or pastors from moving freely according to God's Word and

arranging relationships according to it. In Germany the congregations usually consist of a mixed bunch of orthodox believers and false believers, indeed obviously unbelievers and scoffers, of those who adorn the Gospel with a Christian life, and of those who spoil and blaspheme the same by manifest sins, indeed cutting off all hope of improvement by allowing themselves to escape the Gospel and the enjoyment of the Holy Sacrament with impunity; and what is often the worst thing, even among the pastors in one and the same regional church, indeed often in one and the same local congregation, the most diverse tendencies are allowed to make themselves known without hesitation, even down to the level of worn-out common rationalism, and the orthodox pastors and members of the congregation are often not even allowed to assert their good right against the foxes and swine that are rooting out the vineyard of the Lord, much less to assert it. [So much for orthodoxy in Germany, notwithstanding Harless and Guericke] In our Synod, on the other hand, no pastor can be received whose ability to know and live has not been tested beforehand, and who has not promised and been required to be in harmony with the others in doctrine and learning, and to conform exclusively to our public confessional writings. Nor may he accept the call of any congregation that does not likewise promise to submit to God's Word in doctrine and discipline according to the pronouncement of our symbolic books. Through carefully applied caution in the reception of the members of the congregation, through the strict, yet evangelical practice of doctrinal and moral discipline according to Matthew chapter 18, which, when the sinner's obduracy has become apparent and after fruitless admonition, ends with the excommunication decided upon in a public congregational meeting and is then pronounced and carried out by the pastor during the public worship service; through announcements for Holy Communion, without which no one is admitted to the sacrament, but especially by means of mutual fraternal admonition (*Bestrafung*), for the increasingly general and perfect exercise of which is labored towards by pastors and the more established members, it is ensured, as far as human weakness permits, that no bitter plant

will grow within the congregations, or, where it has been revealed, that it will be taken out of the congregations, lest it ruin the whole garden of God. The regular congregational meetings, to which everyone has access, but every mature male member has the right and duty to advise and vote, and in which the congregation itself discusses, deliberates and decides all its internal and external affairs with its pastor and elders, and where the admission of new members and the exclusion of the impenitent persons (*reudigen Schafe*) is undertaken and decided upon, prevent the participation of the congregation in its particular affairs, such as those of the Church in general, from slackening or even dying away, but keep it fresh, alive and active, and inspire ever new and greater love for the work of the Lord in particular and in general, the more the pastor himself finds pleasure and joy in drawing the congregation to the maturity necessary for this purpose. [[Missourian congregational meetings](#)]

Thus we have at least made a beginning of a genuine congregational and church life, in which all conditions are determined according to the guidelines of the divine Word, the rights of pastors and listeners are respected, and the freedom of the individual congregations, as well as the unhindered activity and effectiveness of the whole, is taken into account and thereby finds its appropriate field; where order reigns in freedom and freedom reigns in order; where the Word governs and rules, and the obedience of faith is established in love, and where finally the life of faith of the individual as well as of the whole can develop and prove itself fresh and joyful in an ecclesiastically healthy form. And although, unfortunately, many things remain to be lamented and desired in the individual as well as in the whole, we still have to praise the dear Lord for the glory of his undeserved great mercy, that in the older and more established churches such a life, even if it is really found in weakness, is striven for in all. And this must also be the case for you, dear reader if

you are otherwise a living member of the body of Christ, that it gives you great joy, especially if you belong to those who up to now have been helping the cause of the Lord in America through prayer and assistance; you see that your prayer has been answered, your gifts have borne fruit through the blessing of the Lord, and you will now also be all the more willing to lend your ear and heart to our request for further assistance, and that hand, and not empty, will soon find its way here.

[↑] In the following the two delegates explain that they want to keep silent about all other miseries that still exist under the church conditions in North America, except one thing that diminishes the joy and the thanksgiving in them for the otherwise wonderful blessings with which God crowns the Missouri Synod. One must still see hundreds of thousands of members of the Lutheran Church without Word and Sacrament, without any pastoral care, one must fear that they and their children will sink back into paganism or become the prey of foreign sects. One sees how this misery is further increased by every ship coming from the old fatherland, which often brings over the scum of every abomination, [likely the radical '48ers] but so very rarely a faithful shepherd. In addition there are dirty, blasphemous German newspapers, through which the abyss of hell empties out in all directions into the masses of the German population of America, and this ruin, which tears in by force, cannot be countered because of a lack of pastors; indeed, one would like to lament and weep over the nameless misery of his people. — Since the requests for faithful pastors from the congregations are becoming more and more frequent, it is necessary to maintain, in addition to the seminary at Fort Wayne and the pastors trained there, a theological seminary, which also provides a scholarly education for the church servants. Luther had already said: “As dear to us as the Gospel is, so firmly let us hold fast the study of languages”. So thirteen years ago, with self-sacrificing love and faithfulness, on the banks of the Mississippi River, the foundation

was made for a learned educational institution for the Lutheran Church. The Lord had blessed it, the number of secondary seminary and theological seminary students was growing, so that the space of Concordia College, which had been moved to St. Louis, was already becoming too small. The central building and the second wing were to be built, but the funds for construction were lacking, since the mostly impoverished congregations were already exhausted by other sacrifices.

Therefore, may the Lord bless this simple word and make the hearts of the German fellow Christians willing to offer a helping hand to the brethren in North America so they can complete the building of this Concordia College. — This would be a thorough help once and for all and the house could soon be finished as a monument of unity of faith and true Christian brotherly love — for the glory of the Lord, who by His death has brought together the children of God and united them in one body. — This address was dated November 28, 1851 in Nuremberg, and signed by C.F.W. Walther and F.C. Wyneken.

It had to be to God's glory, which was the most important thing, when the German members of the faith learned that these former Stephanists, as the Saxon members of the Missouri Synod were called, had been led by God's mercy out of their former mistakes to the knowledge of the pure, clear evangelical truth, and had been led on “the old paths, where is the good way” (Jer. 6:16), and had become the instrument through which the Lutheran Church had prospered and flourished among so many rabid sects and unbelievers of all kinds. The enemies of the Missouri Synod had tried to cast disgrace on this work of God as if it were an unfair work of deceit, as if the leaders of the Synod had given way in the wrong sense, therefore it was high time to do something to save the glory of God and to reconcile the church of the German fatherland.

In [Der Lutheraner, volume 8 \[1852\] nos. 13-21](#), there is a travel report by the editor Prof. Walther, which

he wrote after returning from that trip in 1852. [[English translation in M. Harrison, *At Home in the House of My Fathers*, pp. 27-106](#)] He and Pastor Wyneken, it is said there, were happy and confident of their call on that journey, the hand of God had guided them and directed everything for the good, and so they should call out to all brothers and sisters near and far: “The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad!” [[Ps. 126:3](#)]

[Walther reports] First of all, the actual purpose of the journey was achieved through God's help and grace. Pastor Loehe's reservations have faded away. “We have in him again the old intercessor not only before God but also before men, the bond is again tightened and tightened.” In one of the following numbers of *Der Lutheraner*, as a testimony to this, the explanation which Pastor Loehe published in his [Mitteilungen](#), as already mentioned above, is quoted. However, after the delegates returned twice more at Pastor Loehe's invitation to Neuendettelsau after those first meetings, the final report reads: “We have come even closer to each other.” The individual differences that remained are such that they could no longer be settled. During the mutual exchange of ideas it became apparent that there was a difference in the doctrine of ordination. Only if one understands the whole institution of the preaching ministry is this, as an origination in the wider sense, an institution of God, not however if one understands by ordination the ceremony of the laying on of hands, i.e. ordination in the narrower sense. Although the delegates assured Pastor Loehe that they also held the act of ordination in high esteem, and that it was an outrage to despise this apostolic ecclesiastical custom, which serves to confirm the call and which is carried out with prayer and the laying on of hands, was certainly not without blessing, Pastor Loehe nevertheless believed that he could not give up his conviction that ordination was a divine order. Since, on the other hand, Pastor Loehe again expressed his conviction that all rights and glory

acquired by Christ originally did not belong to any one class, but to the congregations of believers and saints, the justified children of God, it was inevitable that he extended a brotherly hand to the Missouri delegates and promised to do the work of the Lord in fellowship with them.

Since the travel report published in [Der Lutheraner, volume 8](#) gives a picture of the ecclesiastical conditions in Germany at that time, and the different directions in which the regional churches were divided also came to light in the discussion of the doctrine of the Church and the Ministry, we are reporting the following about it in excerpt.

[↑] It was a particular pleasure for the delegates to find themselves in complete agreement with Prof. Dr. [Guericke](#). From Magdeburg, where they wanted to establish a connection with the separated Lutherans, but did not meet the pastor there, they traveled to Halle, where they found such a warm welcome from Dr. Guericke that they had not expected. The latter informed them that he had been involved in a very similar struggle on the soil of the German Church within the Breslau Synod; there, too, they wanted to assert hierarchical principles from one side, and already the Lutheran chief counselor, “W.”, had been close to returning to the papacy as a result of his Romanizing, etc. Together with Dr. Guericke also Pastor Wermelskirch fought against the intrusion of these hierarchical doctrines; with joy, so Guericke further explained, he had followed the development of the Missouri Synod; he had therefore let the following, among other things, enter the [Rudelbach-Guericke publication](#):

“In America, both parties are already in a fierce battle. In the actual focus of the dispute, which is admittedly not yet recognized by many, the Saxons are decidedly right, Grabau and his supporters decidedly wrong. No biblical passage dealing with election, ordination and the office of Christian pastors, not apostolic practice, not even the apparent wavering of the old Lutheran Church in

constitutional issues furnishes authority or even a pretext for the establishment of a special spiritual state... .. May this serve as a warning, an encouragement to vigilance! Small and unremarkable, the papistical mischief begins with the praise of indifferent ceremonies, and then gradually the succession of the means of grace (the inheritance of the Word and the sacraments from the Apostles), which alone builds Christianity, is overshadowed by the succession of the ministers of the Church, then, in a logical progression, shifts the focus of Christian life from doctrine to constitution, whereby the gospel is forgotten, but human orders and commandments are respected, and finally the papal edifice of the Middle Ages, which claims all divine and human rights for itself alone and makes them serve its interests, is established. Once a reckless hiker has loosened a bit of snow from the top of the Alps, he can't stop the devastating avalanche in its fall later on," says Prof. Guericke, "in the same way, in the spiritual realm, things move fast on the way down and faster and faster. For this reason, everyone who cares about the goods of Christian freedom and the general priesthood of all believers, which were regained during the Reformation, should keep watch. Prof. Guericke also did not fail, when the delegates took leave of him, to admonish them faithfully and warmly to hold on to the recognized truth. "This admonition," as Prof. Walther wrote, "was as beneficial to us as it was urgent."

[↑] Since Dr. von [Harless](#) was high court preacher in Dresden at that time, the delegates also visited this man, who was at the same time head of the Saxon Consistory. Harless also testified of his participation in the work of the North American mission. He too hoped for all the more blessings from the success of the Missouri Synod, because he had little hope for a prosperous development of the Lutheran Church in Germany. Harless also wanted to do his part to promote the St. Louis college building. As a friend of the Queen of

Bavaria he gave the delegates a letter to the Queen, in which she was asked to organize a general church collection in the Protestant part of Bavaria, which should be gathered for the benefit of the St. Louis college building. The delegates gratefully received this letter and, when they arrived in Erlangen, discussed the necessary steps to achieve this goal, which held the promise for a large contribution for the seminary building. They were directed to Munich, where they were first to visit the Protestant Dean Burger and the Lutheran-minded consistorial counselor [Böckh](#). In Munich, everything had already succeeded so far that the letter was delivered to the Queen by a royal servant, and she had already asked whether her pastor, the dean in question, would also approve of the recommendation of the two delegates. Just then, that consistorial counselor Böckh informed them in confidence that the Bavarian consistory would send out an official order against Pastor Loehe and the Lutherans like-minded with him, in which it was indicated to them that they must either give up their special position or resign their offices as pastors. Since Pastor Loehe protested justifiably against the mixed communion practice which exists in Bavaria and asked the Consistory to remedy this annoyance, the Consistory Councils did not consider such action against Pastor Loehe. This disclosure was so depressing for the two delegates that they were soon determined to withdraw their request for support, which had already been made, because they did not want to accept gifts from a church authority which threatened the determined Lutherans with resignation. Although the chief Consistorial Councillor Böckh detained the delegates one day longer, they still maintained their declaration that they could not now make any request to the Consistory without injuring their conscience and Christian sincerity. The delegates also regretted that among the professors of the University of Erlangen there was only one, namely Prof. Delitzsch, who was

against the unionist practice of the Lord's Supper on the side of Pastor Loehe, just as in Erlangen the university teachers, who were otherwise considered Lutheran, paid homage to different theological trends. On this journey it became clear that the truth goes right through the middle, and that it needs its weapons sometimes on the right, sometimes on the left. In the valley of the [Mulde River](#) in Saxony, where Prof. Walther's home is, his friends held conferences in which the doctrine of the sacred office of the ministry was discussed. There, well-meaning Christians claimed that whoever became saved must hear the sermon of a pastor under all circumstances, that the mere reading of the Word cannot have any effect on faith; indeed, as necessary as the earthly element of water is for baptism, the parish office is just as necessary for salvation. The delegates [[Walther/Wyneken](#)] objected that contempt for the office of the ministry should not be a damnable sin, [[Kramer: The delegates defended themselves against the suspicion that they held that contempt for the office of the ministry is not a damnable sin](#)] but they also asserted that the power to believe lay in the Word of God, not in the person of the pastor; therefore, even when the Word is read, the Word can exercise its power. — On the other hand, Prof. Walther further reported that he had noticed to his horror that Prof. [Hoefling](#) and the other theological teachers in Erlangen (with the exception of Delitzsch) denied the divine institution of the office of the ministry. According to Hoefling's teaching, although the general command of God to distribute the means of grace was present, yet that the pastoral ministry was established in every congregation was only out of a kind of moral necessity! Prof. Walther, on the other hand, again asserted that by the selection and calling of the apostles, a special office, a pastoral ministry, was given to the Church, which, as the Apology and Smalcald Articles confess, had [God's](#) command to choose pastors! — It is important to note that the delegates of the Missouri Synod protested also against this tendency, which inclines toward the false doctrine of the Socinians in the same way in which the opposite doctrine Romanizes. The testimony given against Hoefling also refuted the accusation of the Grabau party, as if the Missourians wanted to reject the divine order of the ministerial office.

By the difficult position which Pastor Loehe and his friends took in the middle of the state church (which was considered Lutheran after all), i.e. that they declared to the Consistory that it was not up to them to resign their office, as they had been indirectly expected to do, one could already see at that time that these German state churches, in which the external constitution was held in much higher esteem than fellowship in the faith, had irreparably fallen into a state of the “Union”. Even in Northern Germany, where the delegates stayed with Pastor Wyneken's friends before their departure, they were surprised to see that one only wanted a Christian state, and over this goal they completely forgot how much the church had to pay for its connection with the state. The poor people see in the pastor more and more a civil servant appointed by the authorities in their interest, and thus Christianity itself is placed under suspicion.

On December 30 the delegates embarked at Calais for their return journey, on January 16 they landed in New York after a difficult journey, and they arrived happily in St Louis on February 2, 1852. “The Lord God has graciously preserved us on the long journey,” Prof. Walther exclaims at the end of his report, “that we never dashed our foot against a stone.”
[Ps. 91:12]

[↑] The letters of admonition of the Leipzig and Fürth conferences and the expert opinion of the Breslau High Church Council.

Although the delegates of the Missouri Synod, in their address to their brethren in the faith in Germany, were completely silent about the dispute between the two synods of Missouri and Buffalo, and confined themselves to proving that the Missouri pastors in their congregations are also relentlessly taking the Lutheran Confessions seriously and that their work is not in vain in the Lord,

the Missouri Synod delegates nonetheless decided to give an account also to the German Church of their relationship to Pastor Grabau and his followers, both with regard to the doctrinal dispute and the related practice. [↑] Already a year and a half later, when Pastors Walther and Wyneken had completed their journey to Germany, Pastors Grabau and von Rohr appeared in Germany as delegates of the Buffalo Synod. In the printed pamphlets which they distributed there, it was said that they had to show their sister churches (according to the word: “Tell it to the church”) what injustice the Missourians were doing to them, the Buffalo people, by interfering with their office and thereby starting an angry fraternal war in America. With this accusation they not only appeared before Pastor [Loeche](#) in Bavaria, but also before the conference in [Leipzig](#) on September 1, 1853, which was already then attended annually by many respected Lutheran theologians in Germany. This conference followed on from the Leipzig Mission Festival and after the most important matters had been dealt with, the Hanoverian Superintendent [Muenchmeyer](#) appeared with a report in which he announced already in a pre-conference the evening before one had heard from the pastors Grabau and von Rohr how the cause for the deplorable controversy in America was the ban or excommunication exercised by the synod of Buffalo according to the Word of God and its church order, notwithstanding that from the Missourian side the parties (*Rotten*, mobs) who had apostatized in this way were accepted and provided with pastors without one consulting their former authority, the synod of Buffalo. In this way the ecclesiastical unity among them had been completely disrupted and an even more horrible Babel would have been created in America if the Buffalo people had wanted to take the same procedure. These [Buffalo] delegates now wished to have the advice of the Assembly and said that it would help them in this sad dispute by answering three questions. The first question was whether

a ban carried out in a Lutheran church, however unjustly, was wrong. This question was answered with “No” by the conference, but there were voices which added, “But such a church is obliged to refrain from its injustice.” ([Ahlfeld](#)) The second question was: Whether, in the event of an emerging or ongoing doctrinal dispute, such as that between two Lutheran synods over ministry and church, each of them has the right to take in the sinners of the others who have been excommunicated in Christ's order immediately and until the doctrinal dispute is resolved? After Muenchmeyer *) had made the remark that these were such points on which neither God's Word nor the Confessions of the church (?) had given a definite decision (!), this question was again answered with “No.”

The third question was, as the Leipzig Conference explained, already included in the second one, namely whether it is permitted to break into another congregation during an ongoing doctrinal dispute and erect an opposition altar.

Since the first of these three questions shows that Pastor Grabau admitted to having imposed an unjust ban from time to time, the conference would have been well advised to tell him

*) Unfortunately, the Leipzig Conference, in [Muenchmeyer](#), heard a speaker who was anything but impartial in this doctrinal dispute, and who in these relevant doctrines differed from the Lutheran symbols themselves. In a paper on the Church, Münchmeyer virtually declared that the doctrine of the Apology describing the Church was erroneous, and polemicized against the old Lutheran official doctrine in the Erlangen [Zeitschrift für Protestantismus und Kirche](#) (*Journal for Protestantism and Church*) of 1852, until the editors refused to accept more essays from him. He is the author of the letter of admonition sent from Leipzig to the Missouri Synod. The separated Pastor [Besser](#), however, had to learn later that he too was accused of rebellion by [Wangemann](#) for the sake of his separation, to which he himself replied: “According to such a doctrine, Luther too would have violated the Fourth Commandment by undertaking the Reformation.”

to make amends for the injustice he committed as soon as he got home, but instead it was finally passed over to Pastor [Muenchmeyer](#), [Besser](#) and Prof. Dr. [Kahnis](#) to write a letter of admonition to the two synods of Missouri and Buffalo, which appeared in the [Saxon Church and School Gazette](#) on October 21, 1853. The undersigned [[Muenchmeyer](#)] writes at the beginning that they are certainly impartial, for they recognized friends and brothers in both synods, they also admit that the members of the Missouri Synod were not heard about the accusation made by Pastors Grabau and von Rohr, nevertheless, the verdict is that although the Buffalo people had used the ban far too often, which was only meant to be the last resort, and that it also failed in the way it carried on the quarrel (their ranting), that however the Missouri Synod accepted without further ado (!) those who had been banned according to the ordinance of Christ (!), and wanted to continue to accept them until the doctrinal dispute was ended. The letter declared that the congregations to which the Missourian pastors had gone in this case (after they had long since resigned from the Buffalo Synod for reasons of conscience) were not calling congregations; the Missouri Synod had taken up a foreign ministry here, which Luther (as the Missourians well know and also cite from Luther in the book of Church and Ministry) rejects; indeed, the signatories of this letter make themselves so pleasing to the Buffalo people that they finally advise the Missourians, even though the passages of 2 Thess. 3:14-15 and Rom. 16:17 do not stamp it as a sin for the Buffalo people to conduct a colloquium immediately with the Missourians, that they should rectify the wrong (of which they were accused by the Buffalo delegates) beforehand, before the colloquium was conducted (i.e. they should call the opposition pastors away from their congregations, as though it were in the power of the synod as synod to do this!), otherwise the words might apply: There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel! [[Josh. 7:13](#)] It was feared that without this action on the part of Missouri the blessing of the Lord might not rest on the colloquium!

From the very beginning, the authors of this letter

proceed on the false premise that, although they recognize the two parties mutually as standing in the faith and belonging to the Lutheran Church, they disregarded the fact that Pastor Grabau, from the very beginning of the dispute, even before there were any opposition congregations against him, had declared in his anti-criticism to the Saxon pastors that he could no longer recognize them as Lutheran pastors, while through their new congregation rules they to do precisely the same thing that the Prussian government had done in its council orders. He must therefore continue the fight which he waged against Prussian liberalism in America against the Missourians! In the course of the following years, quite a few were then expelled from the Buffalo Synod for the very reason that, as it was said, “Missourian principles” were being proclaimed. When, for example, the above-mentioned cent tax requirement [see p. 200] was imposed on the congregations by the Senior Minister [Grabau], the pastor in the large congregation of Wolcottsville, N. Y. [Hochstetter!], was instructed by the Senior Minister to ask everyone in the confessional, when the men would come to private confession, if they were satisfied with the introduction of this cent tax (including the manner of its introduction); and if this question was denied, the Buffalo pastor refused absolution! Since, as Grabau claimed, the right to make ordinances in the church belongs exclusively to the pastors, while the household (i.e. the hearers) was only to obey, those who thought that matters of means should be submitted by the pastor to the congregational assembly for deliberation and final joint decision were considered rebels and mobsters and, if they remained with their convictions, were banned by the Buffalo ministry. Through the above-mentioned questions presented in the confessional-box, those who, as they expressed themselves, had no interest in the cent tax dispute and remained neutral were also forced out of the Buffalo congregations. One can see from such examples that in the Buffalo Synod it was the intention of the synod to involve all people in the false hierarchical doctrines

and unjust practices, even that it should be imposed upon them. [↑]
“Only those congregations which in their conscience could no longer bear it — have we accepted,” the Missouri Synod responded, among other things, in its [Response to the Admonition issued by the Leipzig Conference](#). This letter, signed by President F. Wyneken and Secretary F. W. Husmann under July 1, 1854, is found in [nos. 24 and 25 Vol. 10 of Der Lutheraner](#). The [Saxon Church and School Gazette](#) [1854, Nr. 91, p. 741 ff.] also published this reply in three numbers, and did justice to the Missouri Synod by stating that, both in doctrinal and practical matters, this letter had thoroughly answered all the objections of Pastors Muenchmeyer, Dr. Kahnis, and Besser. Indeed, one may add: if ever a mistaken letter which fights against a mere phantom has been refuted in all its parts, it has done so by this *Response*. First of all, this letter proves that the banning procedure in the Buffalo Synod is not done in the order of Christ, for He makes the Church, i.e. a gathering of teachers and hearers, the last and highest judgement, Matt. 18:17, but the Buffalo Synod deprives the hearers or its representatives of the right to be informed and convinced of the facts of the matter, for the sake of which a former brother is to be kept for excommunication; on the other hand, it is proven that under the government of Grabau there were not a few cases of excommunication which were not based on any violation of one of the Ten Commandments but on the false doctrines of the authority of the ministerial office, as if one could force those to apologize and repent who, in the external church matters, i.e. in merely indifferent things [**or adiaphora**], did not believe themselves obliged to unconditional obedience to the pastor and the ministry. A presumption of Grabau, which goes against Article XIV [[XXVIII, § 14](#)] of the Apology, where the much misused passage Hebr. 13:17 is explained as follows: “their jurisdiction does

not extend to sin against their new laws, but only for sin against God's commandment, for the Gospel does not give them (the bishops) a governance except the Gospel, that is clear and certain.” [[German version](#)]

Although several members of the Leipzig conference wanted to respond to the doctrinal dispute, also two voices (Pastor Engel and Dr. Marbach, who knew more about the issues in question than the others) protested against the proceedings of the conference, Superintendent Muenchmeyer rejected these on the grounds that it would go too far to want to deal with the doctrinal dispute; nevertheless the conference took it upon itself not only to judge the practice of the Missouri Synod, which must nevertheless follow from the rightly existing doctrines, but it also demanded that the Missouri Synod should let the doctrines of Church and Ministry be left as an open question “until the church had spoken about it; for those doctrines were only now to be further developed theologically. The diverging views on these questions, of which only one is Scriptural and symbolic, but both of which can interpret individual statements of the Scripture and the symbols for themselves, neither of which is explicitly rejected, should be allowed to exist side by side in this Church until the Church has spoken.” The response of the Missouri Synod to this is: “Here we must honestly admit that we either do not understand what is said, or we find a strange contradiction in this; for if, for example, Pastor Grabau's doctrine is in accordance with Scripture and the symbols, then how can his proofs be completely sound? How can Scripture and his testimonies from the symbols speak at the same time for our doctrine, when we have to divorce and contradict his doctrine and vice versa? If, as it is said, only one of these doctrines is Scriptural and symbolic, then the Church has already spoken (in her symbols), and only the symbols can be used to prove which doctrine is faithful to the confession, and as Lutherans we cannot imagine the Church speaking otherwise” — — Already in the first point [

of the response it is said that the Missourians are heartily sorry that the dear brothers refuse to make a decision in the doctrinal dispute with the Synod of Buffalo. “We would gladly submit to such a one, if it overcame our error through God's Word and according to the testimonies of our Church's symbols. We ourselves, in obedience to Holy Scripture and in accordance with our Church confessional writings, have, as we are certain of it, let our doctrines, that is *The Voice of our Church in the Doctrine of Church and Ministry*, go out in print while our delegates were in Germany.” From this every unbiased reader can see that the Missourians have certainly vindicated the divine institution and dignity of the sacred Ministry, — — — — — Pastor Grabau, on the other hand, may show where he has ever explicitly withdrawn the assertion made in his so-called *Pastoral Letter* of 1840 (also repeated in the second Synod Letter) that it is only through the office of the ministry that the holy Sacraments are powerful and effective.

As willing as the Missourians are here to accept doctrines from God's Word, they are nevertheless surprised that a conference consisting mostly of theologians is undecided in these doctrines and declares: “In general we cannot avoid declaring ourselves against the expression ‘the church has not yet spoken’ in the strongest and most definite terms, and to reject it as contrary to Scripture and the Confessions, i.e. as unlutheran.” Finally, Luther's words are quoted here: “When they [those who vacillate] now say that they will wait until the church has determined [the doctrine], let the devil wait that long. I certainly will not wait so long; for the Christian church has already decided all things [doctrines].” [[Die Stimme](#), 164; [Mueller](#), 152; [Harrison](#), 142; cf. [AE 23](#), 287] [↑] From Leipzig, Pastors Grabau and von Rohr went to Bavaria, where a conference of 50 pastors was held in Fuerth on September 22, 1853, before which Pastor Grabau reported in his usual way and complained about the Missourians. The dean there, [E. Stirner](#), finally also addressed a letter of admonition to the Missouri Synod on behalf of this conference in Fürth,

in which it says first of all, one disapproves of the fact that the Missouri Synod had accepted those who had been expelled by the Buffalo Synod, without having asked the church court of this synod for the reason of the excommunication. (It has already been noted above that this questioning on the part of the Missourian pastor took place each time with the Buffalo pastor, but the latter either gave no answer or an abusive answer). Secondly, the Buffalo people may now also let the quarrel rest and not attack the churches that were established by secession any further. Third, one unanimously recognizes the question of the Ministry as an open one and wishes that it would also be regarded and treated in North America in this way. — Although this conference expresses itself more guardedly, and their writing says nothing about a demand that the opposition pastors be first removed before beginning the mutual colloquium, and although the Fuerth Conference only wished that the excommunication of the Buffalo Synod, if not unconditionally approved, might have been considered more seriously, the Fuerth Conference in its part agrees with the Leipzig Conference in this, that it wants the question of the ministry treated and considered as an open question, and confesses even more clearly than the Leipzig Conference that in the German state churches the confessions are understood according to the guidance of Holy Scripture, etc., and that, although the question of the ministry is not a matter of indifference, it is nevertheless necessary still to find the right churchly expression. To this the Missouri Synod replied: “Whoever wants to adjust the Lutheran Confessions himself according to the Scriptures does not understand them better than the rationalists and Union people, who likewise accept the symbols as their rule of faith not because but only insofar as they seem to agree with the Scriptures, yes, one could even swear by the Roman Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent insofar as it was in accordance with the Scriptures; but Lutherans find in all the symbols of their church completely their own confession and understanding of the Scriptures; and that it was for this purpose that they had been pledged to the symbols!” Admittedly, there is such a disagreement among German theologians today that there is hardly any doctrine in the entire Lutheran system of doctrine that is not

made uncertain and being questioned. The Missourians, however, as the above response briefly indicated, are also certain in these doctrines that they are based on the Holy Scriptures and in harmony with the symbols; the reason for their faith brings a certain confidence, but the mere scholarship which most German scholars practice does not lead to the inner certainty nor to the fraternal unity and agreement which is necessary for a Lutheran Council. The Day of Judgement will come much sooner than German theologians will come to an ecclesiastical agreement and expression, meanwhile they are still protected by the "bridle of the state" to which the Leipzig letter also refers for the German states. But the founders of the Missouri Synod refer already in the introduction to the book of *Church and Ministry* to the fact that here (in America) they are not in inherited ecclesiastical circumstances, but rather in the case that they first have to lay the foundation for it, and can lay it unhindered by what already exists, "Rather, these conditions have compelled us to search with great seriousness for the principles on which, according to God's Word and the confessions of our Church, the constitution of a truly Lutheran congregation should be based and shaped. The less we ask ourselves the question: what can we retain without sin? but rather the question: what should it be like according to God's Word and the principles expressed and proven in the confessions our church? — the more urgent was the need for us to come to clarity and certainty of faith about the principles of the doctrines of the church, the ministry, the power of the keys, church polity, etc. and the like. We did not pattern the doctrine of our church after the conditions prevailing here, but we established the church according to the doctrine of our church. Whoever doubts this, we confidently invite: 'Come and see!' —" [*Die Stimme*, p. VIII; *Mueller*, p. 10]

[↑] In Germany, too, the importance of this book, which in its testimonies gathered a council of Lutheran witnesses from Luther down to Baier and Hollaz,

has been recognized from several sides. Not only [C. Stroebel](#) [or [K. Ströbel](#)] exclaimed in Rudelbach and Guericke's magazine: "Now everyone has the choice of standing on the side of the Romanizers or on the side of Lutheran orthodoxy," also the [Leipziger Repertorium](#), edited by Dr. [E. Gersdorf](#), wrote in the review of that book: "While our German brothers are moving to America to found a refuge of a physical kind there, America is in a position to give advice and help to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the German motherland." After Prof. Walther had taken note of the sad paralysis of the Protestant consciousness in Germany during his journey, it soon became clear that "the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, reborn under a thousand storms, tribulations, deceptions and disappointments, was currently more aware of its paternal heritage than the children of the cradle of the Reformation." Prof. [Guerike](#) wrote then, after the Leipzig Conference had so hastily sat in judgment on American affairs, that it had lost its ecumenical (truly catholic) character. The Leipzig Conference has never regained the influence it had before that time. Both the Leipzig as well as the Fuerth Conference were outsmarted by Pastor Grabau by the fact that instead of even looking at the far-reaching doctrinal differences that exist between the two synods, they immediately took up the question of whether it was permissible, if (for example) a dispute arose over the doctrines of Church and Ministry, at once to erect an opposition altar for this purpose! Of course, there are doctrinal differences which have less influence on the life of the congregation and on church practice than if, for example, a difference were to arise over the question of what kind of descent into hell Christ had gone through, both generally and in particular; *) but the doctrines of the Church and of the Ministry must necessarily be applied in practice.

*) It goes without saying that it is not intended here to present as "open questions" any doctrines about the descent into hell that are contrary to Scripture, such as the modern doctrine of Hades, for instance, but that only human opinions about

As shown above, members of the congregation immediately feel whether the pastor is working together with his hearers, and whether he is basing what he preaches and purposes on God's Word or on his ministerial authority (Pastor Grabau used to answer when asked to give reasons: it's enough that I know), whether he extends his ministerial authority more and more and imputes to the members of the congregation as sin, what is no sin at all, so that not only Christian freedom but also justice has to suffer from it, or whether he cheerfully puts his own person aside and humbles himself. Where church discipline and the ban is really practiced, and this was the case on both sides, such opposites must show their practical consequences; only where the binding key in the hands of the bureaucratic church superiors rusts, and the peace of the church spreads over the congregations, as it does in the state churches, can such doctrines remain as open questions and be left to the scholars to find answers. Here too, what has already been said about America in general applies: the things that are only discussed in Germany, they come to the fore in North America! — Like a limping messenger, who nevertheless brings the right message, a letter of mission from the High Consistory of the separated Lutheran Church of Prussia, addressed to the Buffalo Synod, arrived in Buffalo after the departure of Pastors Grabau and von Rohr. Grabau and von Rohr had also called on the members of the High Consistory in Breslau, but had not found the desired reception with them. The now sainted Pastor Ehlers, an evangelically minded man who was then still a member of the High Consistory, rebuked the fanatical polemics against the Missouri Synod, as he was not only well versed in the writings of Luther and the old teachers, but also gave the congregation of saints their right. If one considers that the vast majority of

things about which Scripture is silent, and that is to say those opinions which are not contrary to other clear Scripture, should be said to be of lesser influence.

separated Lutheran congregations in Prussia also came into being as a result of secession from the United Church, then one could reproach them with the same right that they had erected counter altars and that the separated Lutheran pastors had broken into the congregations of the state-church pastors, as was blamed on the Missourian opposition pastors from the Leipzig Conference. It may also be that, since there is no congregation without hypocrites, that impure motives may now and then have played a part in secession from the state church, such as those which were laid to the charge of the separation from Grabau's Synod. — The letter of response of the Missouri Synod to the Leipzig Conference expressly emphasizes that the Buffalo Synod had been presented “that the rifts that have arisen could be healed immediately and everything could be brought back into the old order, if it, the Buffalo Synod, would only respond to a peaceful religious discussion and at least stop condemning our doctrine.” Not only his opponents, however, reproached Pastor Grabau with the Scripture word of 1 Peter 3:15, in addition to the examples of the doctrinal discussions held in earlier church history, but the Breslau High Consistory also advised Pastors Grabau and von Rohr, upon their request, to accept the request of the Missourians for a colloquium. For the sacred cause of God and for the love of Christ they must be advised to do so, according to the letter signed by Privy Councillor Dr. Huschke in March 1854. The same letter emphasized that the Missouri Synod could not be expected to call away in advance the opposition pastors of the congregations formerly associated with Buffalo and to return these congregations in advance to Buffalo; such was not in the power of the Missouri Synod at all, and these pastors concerned would first have to be convinced of the illegitimacy of their position, since the practice which the Buffalo condemned in the Missourians was only a necessary consequence of the doctrines and principles on which the two synods differed.

Only after hearing both parties and on the basis of evidence can a judgment be made as to whether the Missourians have really sinned by accepting those excluded from Buffalo. — [↑] As detailed and fraternal as this address was, which the closest brethren in faith addressed to the Buffalo people, the latter nevertheless followed the Breslau expert opinion with a negative answer. (See the *Kirchliches Informatorium* of January 1, 1855). Pastor Grabau was too proud to have his alleged orthodoxy questioned from a colloquium. Therefore, all attempts at reconciliation between him and the Missourians were in vain. — One could have expected that after his return from Germany he would at least speak a more moderate language towards them, which he had been admonished to do from his journey, but nevertheless, without having any urgent reason, he soon accused Professor Walther again of Jesuitism. But the more he hardened in his goings-on, and the longer he refused to go into a colloquium with the Missourians, the more clearly the fruits of his hierarchical teaching and actions became apparent. It is already noted above in what way the cent tax was carried out by him. More than 250 families, very important communities, than: Johannisburg, most of Wolcottsville and others were classed as being banned and excluded. Although a ban based on such a constitution was certainly undeserved, these excommunicated persons followed the advice of some Missouri pastors to whom they had turned and presented the Buffalo Synod at its sixth session in 1859 with a letter asking them, for God's sake, to take steps to unite with the Missouri Synod. Therefore they approached Pastor Grabau, and several Buffalo pastors asked him at this synod convention whether he would be responsible for the proceedings in Johannisburg and other places on the judgment day. Grabau, however, declared that it was now necessary to proceed to the final judgment on the Missourians and enforced a decision

which he dictated to the Buffalo people in writing with the following words: “That we must now regard the Missouri Synod as such according to Christ's command in our hearts and with our confession of paganism and as publican... .. and it follows that we must publicly deny fraternal fellowship with this persecutor of ours, the Missouri Synod, in the name of Jesus.” — Page 28 of the Buffalo Synod Letter concludes this declaration with the words: “And finally, we call upon all honest Christians, and exhort them in the Lord, to leave these false prophets and destroyers of the Church and give glory to God and His truth, for our God speaks Isaiah 9, ‘For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed’! May God give the darkened Missourians a merciful awakening.” — Pastor Grabau and his followers hereby imposed the ban on the entire Missouri Synod, which already counted about 200 congregations at that time! One can also see from the demand with which that synodical resolution appealed to all members of Missouri Synod congregations, how happy Grabau and his adherents would have been if he could have alienated the Missouri Synod congregations from their pastors. Pastor Grabau's pretence, that he boasted in Germany, that he was far from being inclined to retaliate against the Missourians in the same way with the same things was not the truth either. Even before that time, he had accepted and given pastors to many who had seceded from the Missouri Synod in Cincinnati and Pomeroy, Ohio. Just as a Roman bishop lays claim to the Protestants in his diocese as, in his opinion, strayed sheep, so also Grabau wanted to draw people to himself as much as he could. From that time on, however, it became more and more obvious that the word from Joshua 7:13, “There is an accursed thing in your midst, O Israel,” which the Leipzig Conference had borrowed from Grabau's mouth and called out to the Missouri Synod at the end of that letter of exhortation, must rather be realized in the Buffalo Synod. No peaceful synodical assembly was granted to them any more. At the following Seventh Synodical Assembly the Senior Pastor succeeded in defeating the opposition, which some

Buffalo pastors raised from the West, but his aversion to Luther and Luther's writings was also evident. When he was reminded that the Formula of Concord also recognized Luther's writings as best explaining the real opinion and understanding of the Augsburg Confession, because Luther was the most distinguished teacher of the Augsburg Confession, Pastor Grabau answered at the Synod that if this was true, he would rather be released from the obligation of the Formula of Concord. — At the eighth convention of the Buffalo Synod it happened that the Synod removed Pastor Grabau, who complained about too much work, from the editorship of the *Informatorium*, and assigned the writer of these lines to do so. Pastor Grabau had not expected this. But the synod members were all the more willing to do this because several Lutheran friends and benefactors from Germany, with whom the Deacon [[Hochstetter](#)] had contacted, complained about the spiteful tone that prevailed in the *Informatorium*. This writer read these letters of complaint to the Senior, who promised to give in and to moderate. But he felt sorry for his *Informatorium*, and the correspondence that the writer of these lines had with his friends in Germany was very annoying to the Senior Pastor. He told the meeting of ministers that the center of the Buffalo Synod must remain with the Senior Pastor, that he knew that they were waiting for his death, that they wanted to destroy his thirty years of work! Around this time he boasted in every sermon of his double martyrdom, which he had suffered in Prussia and after this here in America. And in the Lenten sermons he presented himself as the suffering Christ. At the Eighth Synod it came to light that Pastor Maschhop, the representative of the Senior in Michigan, had deprived a congregation of its pastor because it refused to insure its church property in the deed (bill of sale) for the Buffalo Synod. Pastor Maschhop explained to the congregation that this was the sin of Ananias and Sapphira, which they committed because they did not place their property at the feet of the Buffalo Synod ministerium or the

its Senior Pastor! Many pastors were shocked when they heard this. The Senior did not succeed in justifying this action, and even less so in 1866. — Dr. [Muenkel](#) wrote in his Hanoverian journal that one could see from the events in Buffalo that the hierarchical direction, instead of uniting the church, only caused division. Meanwhile the Buffalo congregations were undermined everywhere, even before the split occurred. What was the state of affairs caused by this trend? The more the Buffalo Synod developed into a party of its own, which believed it had to fight against the so-called church democracy, a body which was to have its head at the Senior Grabau and be obedient to the old ecclesiastical orders as interpreted by the Senior (it was said that these church orders go along side the symbols), the clearer it became that the church, which in reality is primarily a communion of the inner treasures of faith, was to be transformed into a Grabau domain in this area. Instead of preaching the Gospel in such a way that Christians wanted to live their faith, that they learned to think, speak and test whether it would hold true by their own conviction (John 4:12), they wanted to suppress the spiritual priesthood more and more with the help of the ministerium, which they claimed to be infallible. Gradually, each congregation divided into two camps. Although many of them trusted their pastors from the beginning, it was inevitable that this legal system of statutes would cause anger under this government. The time had to come when the magical halo with which the Senior had surrounded himself fell. Doubt and suspicion now came to those who had gone astray with the pastors. And when those who had already converted to the Missouri Synod in the course of time, even today it is sometimes difficult even for the evangelical minded pastors to overcome the mistrust that had taken root in these souls. Since this part of the congregations in Buffalo was notorious for its tendency to “quarrel, rebel

and form mobs”, the writer of these lines at first held from the beginning to the other side, where the favor and satisfaction of the Senior and pastors was sought, and was counted among the “dear children”. Since Pastor Grabau could also flatter, and the Prussian persecution of the 1830s was repeatedly praised, the pride of the church and martyrs on this side was so great that once a Buffalo country pastor rightly preached to his listeners: “You boast: we have emigrated for the sake of faith; you ought rather confess: faith has emigrated from us!” It was revealed where this tendency leads, which bases salvation on visible membership in the church (i.e. the Buffalo Synod). It was again said as with those Jews, according to Jer. 7:4, [here](#) is the temple of the Lord. The adherents of Pastor Grabau were taken to be the little flock to which God had promised the kingdom. The honorable walk before the people, as long as one never stood in church discipline, but knew how to practice ceremonial service, was the justification on which the laity relied. That they are not unified is the consolation that such people take, that they are in the right (visible) Church, that is the reason on which they hope to be saved. — This is the fruit of Grabau’s doctrine of the Church, the outward Church takes the place of true Christianity!

Most regrettable were the pastors, who were met with suspicion, even hatred, whenever they dared to contradict in the meeting of the ministry or otherwise. It was a great misery; at last the temptation taught us to remember the Word. They had clung to one [person](#) for far too long, and as punishment for this they now had to bear enmity from this side. A dark, grim spirit had come over Grabau, and it was also revealed in the pulpit. At the feast of Epiphany in 1866 he complained as if everything was conspired against him, and finally exclaimed: “If some of these gray heads who

heard his sermon and should come to him and confront him, he would not answer them. Soon afterwards, on February 6, he attacked the Deacon [[Hochstetter](#)] in the sermon on Paul's conversion: "Even if he has the pure doctrine," exclaimed Grabau, "he is cursed because he does not preach as I do!" Grabau applied the anathema of Gal. 1:8 to his brethren in office. Since this sermon had been copied by the then colleague Inspector Zeumer and another student, the deacon, accompanied by Pastor Zeumer, soon afterwards went to the Senior and declared that if it continued in this way, the Deacon would file a complaint with the ministry. Pastor Grabau answered challengingly that even if ten thousand pastors were coming, he would not let his mouth be shut. After a few weeks, the writer of these lines handed over a complaint to the Senior Pastor, which contained reservations about his, the Senior's, conduct of office, and was only intended for the pastoral conference. It was said in this writing that Pastor Grabau made the power and validity of the Word of God, especially of his sermon, dependent on his own person; he wanted to be judged by no one, whereas a pastor should gladly be judged by anyone, even if it were a child, and should be able to speak; he also saw the Buffalo Synod as a universal parish, and saw himself as the universal bishop; he was also committing the same abuse with the old church orders as it was sometimes abused by the popes with the so-called. [pseudo-Isidorian decretals](#). Pastor Grabau's claims went even further at that time, he wanted to make himself a bishop, because, as he said, the collegiality in the ministerium went too far. [[↑](#)] Meanwhile it was now said: "So far and no further!" Events that no one had expected occurred blow after blow. First of all, Pastor Grabau resigned his office as Senior (presidency) and the directorship of the college in the presence of the assembled ministers and the church council, and no one asked him to take over these offices again. Afterwards, the first part of the Deacon's [[Hochstetter's](#)] complaint was heard, which Pastor Grabau had added the title

“Jude 19”, and the plaintiff was proved right. Pastor Grabau appealed to the Synod, which was quickly called together for early May. On April 13, in a congregational meeting, he wanted to remove the Deacon by exclaiming that he would certainly die if he were to live next to the Deacon until this Synod convention to which he was being referred. He exclaimed, “Thus I have had a congregation,” and ran away from that congregational meeting without achieving his purpose. However, after a few weeks, since he was making more and more of a spectacle, he succeeded, by the small majority he had among the congregational trustees, in banning the Deacon from the pulpit of the Trinity Church. When a “visitation” was reported to him, Grabau quickly had the same trustees close the church doors in the early hours of Sunday morning and suspend the service in his church, which caused great indignation in the congregation. On the following Sunday, the conditions were such that the part of the congregation which held to the Deacon moved into the hall of the [Martin Luther College](#) to hold its service there. Thus the split in the Buffalo congregation was decided, for after the May Synod convention, which gathered as the Ninth Buffalo Synod, this newly organized congregation, which had appointed the previous Deacon as pastor, rented the French church in Buffalo for its services.

It should be noted, finally, that although it initially seemed that Pastor Grabau was ready to give account to the Synod, on the eleventh day he suddenly renounced the Synod; according to his explanation he was hated by most of the pastors of the Synod. With him, three pastors left the meeting room and also renounced. The other pastors (some twenty), together with the delegates concerned, felt quite perplexed at first, but it was soon felt that a transitional period, a gracious visitation, had come for many. With the departure of Pastor Grabau, the Buffalo Synod took on such a form that it was possible to respond to the colloquium to which the Missouri Synod had been calling for for so many years.

[↑] The more the Missouri Synod had been cursed by Grabau and his party until then, the more it increased, blessed by the hand of God. Its educational institutions flourished, its pastors numbered 300; its writings were read by many; even those synods which had previously been caught up in syncretism and unionism listened to the voice of the Missouri Synod and approached it. From a human point of view, such a synod did not need the Buffalo people, who were in every way bankrupt! The joy was all the greater when Professor Walther, President of the Missouri Synod, invited two delegates of Buffalo Ministerium to Fort Wayne for a meeting, where the preliminaries for the public colloquium to be held in Buffalo were arranged. Chapter IX will report about this colloquium.

IX. [^](#)

The Buffalo Colloquium, that is:

The proceedings and final declarations of the colloquents representing the Buffalo Synod and the Missouri Synod. [[the doctrine of the Church](#) (258); [the doctrine of the Ministry](#) (259); [the doctrine of the Ban](#) (264); [on the Office of the Keys](#) (271); [the power of the minister in indifferent matters \(adiaphora\)](#) (272); [of the doctrine of ordination](#) (274); [Buffalo Synod meets after Colloquium](#) (275); | [^](#)

This colloquium was opened in Buffalo on November 20, 1866, within the reorganized congregation that had parted from Pastor Grabau in May of the same year. The representatives of the Missouri Synod in attendance were Professor [C. F. W. Walther](#), Pastor [H. C. Schwan](#), Dr. [W. Sihler](#) and the delegates: [J. C. D. Römer](#), [J. Keil](#) and Joh. C. [Teiß](#). As colloquents of the Buffalo Synod had been chosen pastor H. von Rohr, pastor Chr. [Hochstetter](#), pastor P. [Brand](#) and the delegates: Chr. [Krull](#), Ernst [Schorr](#) and Hans A. [Christiansen](#).

After a twenty-five year doctrinal dispute preceded this meeting, and the main obstacle, why such a colloquium had not taken place long ago, had now been removed, the Buffalo ministerium of Detroit had already in August of that year informed Professor Walther, the president of the Missouri synod, that on the part of Buffalo one was now also willing to go into the religious discussion offered twenty years before by the Saxon pastors. At the request of Professor Walther, as mentioned above [[p. 256](#)], a meeting and private conversation took place in Fort Wayne on October 10 and 11 of that year between Professor Walther and the local pastor Sihler on the one hand, and the pastors von Rohr and Hochstetter on the other. There the firm hope was gained that the public colloquium would lead to complete understanding and agreement. They had already gotten to know each other when the time of the colloquium in Buffalo on November 20 approached. Apart from the proceedings, which took place in public in the church, it was now also necessary to break the shackles that had been put on both pastors and parishioners by a long-standing party hatred. At the colloquium itself, Pastor von Rohr, one of the Buffalo colloquents, maintained certain doctrinal differences until the end. The others, however, all three Buffalo Synod delegates and Pastors Brand and Hochstetter, put the following into the minutes: “Finally, the Buffalo delegates, having agreed with the declarations of the Missouri colloquents which have been placed into the minutes and these on their part having agreed with the declarations of the Buffalo colloquents, — the doctrinal unity between the Missouri Synod and us is now fully established.”

Thereupon the Missouri colloquents, for their part, recorded the following: “All the present representatives of the Missouri Synod, for their part, respond to the above declaration by declaring that they too, with thanks and praise to the Lord, recognize complete doctrinal unity

with the aforementioned for the outcome of this colloquium and therefore extend their fraternal hand to them in the face of the whole church.”

The doctrinal points, on which differences had previously taken place between the two synods, were discussed one after the other, and these concerned:

[↑] 1. the doctrine of the Church [*Kirche*]. After previous discussion, it was finally declared: That to the Church of which the Apostles Creed speaks, or to the Church in the true sense of the word only true believers and saints belong, or that only these are true members of it, that in this life of such Church there are however always hypocrites or non-Christians mixed in, and that therefore the invisible and visible Church are not two different Churches, but only one.

Since it would be papistic to declare the orthodox visible Church as the one holy Christian Church, outside of which there is no salvation, the colloquents of the Missouri Synod declared that not only those fellowships of people are churches according to God's Word in which the doctrine of the Gospel is preached quite purely and all sacraments are administered without corruption, but also those where, as Luther says, Word and sacrament are not, however, denied and rejected, but where both remain essential; it is assumed also that such fellowship in its public confession would be afflicted and stained with fundamental errors, namely with errors which do not downright overthrow the foundation, but can directly overthrow it (e.g. an error about Holy Communion). — Pastor von Rohr was not satisfied with this explanation, but remained of the opinion that an assembly which is in a fundamental error is not a church. Whereupon he was shown that according to 2 Thess. 2:4, Acts 29:30, 1 Cor. 11:19, 2 Peter 2:1, Rev. 2:15 sects arise in the midst of the church, that such sects are not of the church (not belonging to the church), but in the church, that also the Pope, the head of the sectarians, being in the church, has his seat in the temple of God, as Luther in his

writing against Hans Wurst [[AE 41, 179-256](#)] proves such a thing and says in a simile: he lies on the church like the bear lies on top of a man, but which does not belong to the man at all because of this, on the contrary, one would like to get rid of him. — “In answer to Pastor von Rohr, we do not ask and believe that the Church consists of all sects, but only that the sects are in the Church like filth in the human body, but that they also have believers in their fellowships, as long as they still possess the Word of God, for which reason they are still called churches, and that they are still within the boundaries of so-called Christianity. The sects, as such, do not therefore belong to the church of the called, but are merely in the multitude which we call the church of the called, or the universal visible Church.”

Accordingly, the other five Buffalo colloquents recognized as false the following, which had been found in the [Informatorium](#) and partly also in the Buffalo synodical reports up to that time: (1) The visible Lutheran Church is not a particular church, but the one flock of which the Lord Christ speaks, John 15:16, and outside of it God does not gather His sheep! (2) No one can be saved outside the visible Lutheran Church. (3) False churches do not contain the invisible church as a part of their particular denominations within themselves, and therefore cannot be called church by [synecdoche](#) [[a figure of speech](#)] (i.e. for the sake of the believers hidden within them). (4) The Church does not have the highest and last judgment or the keys directly, but only insofar as it has the office of the Ministry that guides the Confessions, that is, that the highest and last judgment is given only to those in the holy ministry. As a result of the rejection of these assertions, it has also been admitted that the lay delegates to the Councils (synodical conventions and colloquiums) have the same right to judge as the pastors.

[↑] 2. the doctrine of the holy Ministry. After the Buffalo colloquents’ concerns about the doctrine that the office of the Ministry is transferred [*übertragen*] by the congregations to the one who is called were heard and discussed,

Prof. Walther, along with the other Missourian colloquents, put into the minutes the following, which put [Thesis VII in the second part of the book of Church and Ministry](#) (see Chapter VII) in a clear light:

Only the truly believing persons belong to the Church. According to Matt. 16, Christ gave the Church of the believers the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and with them all the powers and rights that exist in the Church, which is why the Apostle in 1 Cor. 3 also calls out to the believers: “All things are yours.” In the Church of the New Testament, the distinction that took place in the Church of the Old Testament was made by the cancelation of only one tribe, and especially one family, having the priesthood; according to 1 Peter 2, it is rather the whole Church of the believers who are of priestly race and class. Therefore, while in the Old Testament no act, such as a sacrifice, which belongs to the priest, was valid if it was performed by a person who did not belong to the separated priestly family, all the believers of the New Testament, on the other hand, have the inner capacity to perform all priestly functions, no longer being, like the believers of the Old Testament as children under guardianship, where there is no difference between them and servants, but are free children of God according to Galatians. 4:1. But Christ, in addition to the spiritual priesthood, by the selection and calling of the holy Apostles to the public administration of all priestly offices, established and instituted the public Ministry in His Church for all time until the end of time.

With this, Christ has not abolished the equality of all His believers according to their status and rights, for they are and remain all brethren, spiritual priests and kings; but because Christ has ordered and instituted the public preaching Ministry among His Christians, as spiritual priests, no private Christians are now allowed to exercise the rights of the spiritual priesthood in public office, but only as their

status and calling and need demands. On the other hand, since those who hold the office of the public Ministry are distinguished from Christians only by the fact that they administer the priestly offices which belong only to Christians in the public office, they are not special, privileged priests, and do not constitute a special priesthood, but are only the servants among priests.

The church is, as Scripture says, the mistress of the house, while the public pastors are the stewards; the one is the bride of Christ, the pastors are her servants, according to 2 Cor. 4:5, Col. 1:24-25. The public preaching Ministry, however, is not transferred by [*von*] the congregation or church, but by [*von*] God only through [*durch*] the congregation or church, namely through election and calling. The church is not the first and original cause of it, but only the mediate cause, or, as our theologians say, the less original (*minus principalis*); much less is the public ministry of preaching merely the consequence of a moral necessity, that is, a human church order [*per Hoefling*]. The first and original cause of it is rather the great God himself, it is divine institution. Hence public pastors, although they are servants and ministers of the Church, are even more servants and ministers of God, and their Ministry, although they administer it in the name and in the place of the Church, rather carry it out in the name and in the place of God and Christ, or are ambassadors in Christ's place.

It is true that, by virtue of the calling, the church or congregations [*Kirche oder Gemeinde*] do not transfer to the ministers of the church any offices other than their own (without, of course, losing them in the same way that the householder does not lose any of his rights when he transfers the rights of the household to someone); the mere fact that it transfers on the ministers of the church the task of administering these offices publicly is not because every Christian has the right to exercise the office of preaching publicly, but because Christ has given His Church the command and power to call special persons to it, and to entrust them with the task of administering the office publicly

among Christians; therefore the public Ministry is by no means a so-called collective priesthood, or that it could be called such, for Christians are priests through their baptism which they have received or at least embraced through faith; they have not however thereby become public teachers, preachers, pastors, bishops, etc.

When in the book of *Church and Ministry* it is claimed that the public Ministry was established by God for the sake of order alone, it is only in contrast to this, that God, by establishing the public Ministry, has established a new different status, as was the case under the economy of the Law in the Old Testament. Among incidental causes, for example, there is no doubt that the gifts that Christ gives for the administration of the public Ministry can be used for the common good, and the body of Christ can thus be built up and the like.

When finally in the book [Of the Church and Ministry p. 355](#) it says that Christians are not only entitled but also "called" to exercise their priestly rights to others, then here the call is not taken in the narrower sense of a ministerial call, as the public pastors in the church have it, but in the general sense of being obliged before God. Incidentally, teaching, admonishing, punishing with God's word, consoling, baptizing, absolving and the like are understood here under the priestly offices.
Note:

If a distinction is made between an office *in abstracto* and an office *in concreto*, the former is understood to be the office, if one disregards the persons who bear it; the latter is understood to be the office, if persons are entrusted with it.

2) Pastor von Rohr declared regard to these statements: "I am satisfied with this explanation with regard to the origin of the office of the ministry and the doctrine of transference [*Uebertragungslehre*], which was disputed until then. The expression "Church of believers" belongs to the difference between visible and invisible church and is not meant by me with this agreement."

3) The other colloquents on the part of the Buffalo Synod, Pastor Brand, Pastor Hochstetter, Chr. Krull, E. Schorr and H. Christiansen, declared themselves to be in complete agreement with the above essay, so that the reservations they had earlier were now lifted and no difference remained between them and the other side. —

The false doctrine contained in both the Pastoral Letter and the second Buffalo Synodical Letter was then discussed, as if the valid divine call or public office gave power and effect to the words of institution, e.g. in Holy Communion. (2nd Synodical Letter p. 11 and 12).

With the exception of Pastor von Rohr, who gave his own declaration on this matter, in which he held fast to this false doctrine, which was recognized by all other colloquents as the most serious error ever taught in the Buffalo Synod, the Buffalo colloquents declared the following, among other things:

If, otherwise, the doctrine of justification by faith in Jesus Christ alone is to be right, then, as Luther says, our faith and sacrament need not stand on the (administering) person, whether pious or evil, consecrated or unconsecrated, called or crept in, the devil or his mother. — We well know that the person who presses himself into a ministry without being called sins, according to Hebr. 5:4. We also confess that all those share in sin who, against their better knowledge and conscience, hear such uncalled persons or use their ministry; but God's truth is not annulled by our sinning, and God's Word and Sacrament itself does not become uncertain and powerless, no matter by whom it may be proclaimed and administered. Christ, as Luther says, for the sake of evil men (i.e., in this case, for the sake of deceitful sneaks) will not be a liar nor a deceiver of His church, but will baptize and give her His body and blood, no matter whose hand it is through which He does it. The Word of God itself is called in 2 Cor. 3 a ministry of the Spirit, because "the words that I speak," says Christ in John 6:63,

“they are Spirit, and they are life.” The Holy Spirit, as the ancients teach, is inseparable from the pure Word and properly administered sacraments. Therefore, M. Chemnitz, who is not a pietistic teacher but one of the authors of the Formula of Concord, teaches: “There is no doubt that God is active through the proclaimed voice of the Gospel, by whomever it may be proclaimed.” Chemnitz also firmly rejects the teaching of the Council of Trent which makes the truth and efficacy of absolution and the sacraments dependent, even partially, on the person of the absolver. — If the Word of God were no longer powerful and sufficient in itself to work the saving faith, then our salvation would be bound to a human person, and if any doubt arose as to the legitimacy of the pastor's call, then also the validity of baptism, the Lord's Supper, and absolution would become doubtful, the faith itself would be shaken by this. It was still recognized that the doctrine hereby rejected was contrary to a fundamental article of the Christian faith.

[↑] 3) The doctrine of the ban. Since there are still some doubts and prejudices about the doctrine and handling of the ban, as it rightly exists in the Missouri Synod, also in Germany, the stenographic report on the proceedings conducted in this matter is printed here verbatim from the 1883 *Lutheran Volksblatt*, Nos. 11 and 12:

Of the ban the Buffalo Synod had taught, according to [§ 18, Year 9, No. 16 of *Der Lutheraner*](#), the following:—

“The congregation [*Gemeine or Gemeinde*] therefore has no judgment or command or declaration that he, (the sinner) should be taken for such (a heathen and a publican)” *) (Second

*) This sentence was declared as false because it implies the opinion that the preacher alone has the decision in disputed cases; on the other hand, it was also recognized at the colloquium that even when the congregation decides, only that which is decided according to the Word of God is to be accepted as the voice of the Church [*Kirche*].

(Second Synodical Report p. 28) “It is equally erroneous that in disputed cases the congregation has the decision on the use of the binding and loosing keys.”

Walther: In contrast, the Smalcald Articles say [[Tr 24](#)]: “Christ speaks in these words: *Whatsoever ye shall bind*, [[Matt. 18:18](#)] etc., and indicates to whom He has given the keys, namely, to the Church: *Where two or three are gathered together.*” And Luther says (Erlang. XXXI p. 177): “Thus a Christian congregation is not the maidservant of the official, nor the jailor of the bishop so he can say to her: You Grethe, you Hans, place this one or that one under the ban. — Awe, yes, be welcome, dear official. In worldly supremacy such a thing might go, but here, since it concerns souls, the congregation shall be judge and mistress” (Official was the name of a bishop's vicar, who did the work of the diocese, while the bishop had his pleasure). It is therefore a terrible presumption for the pastors to award the keys to themselves alone and to impose the ban alone; such a ban is against God's Word and therefore false.

von Rohr: When Luther says, “The congregation shall also be judge and mistress,” I allow this to apply to the extent that the congregation may judge, however, by admonishing the sinner as a publican and heathen, because he does not accept the admonition in the second degree. Then there is no need for any further judgment, but only that the church, according to Christ's command, considers him to be a Gentile and publican. For if the sinner has been in the second degree of admonition, our ordinance now comes into effect, namely, that the ministry has jurisdiction, and this [[the Ministry](#)] now uses its power and judges whether Christ's statement is to take place here or not. According to our Second Synodical Letter, “for the sake of all kinds of sin” the ban is to be pronounced on the impenitent. This is our doctrine and I think you could well be satisfied with this declaration.

Walther: We can not be satisfied with that at all, because your doctrine is strictly against the symbols and Luther. It

Herewith the congregations are basically deprived of the right to have a voice in the decision of a ban [*Bannerkenntnis*], they are reduced to being the pastor's jailor [*Stockmeisterin*]. What otherwise it would have been, if the pastors of Buffalo had told their congregations: "You do have the right of the binding key according to the symbols and Matt. 18, but for the sake of order leave it to us in the ministry." However here the congregations are really denied the right, that is to say, they are taught quite falsely."

Hochstetter: But the exhortation that is given to the congregation is also a judgment?

Schwan: Indeed, but who is to decide when there has been enough admonition? According to Matt. 18 obviously the congregation, because the Lord refers to them, even if the sinner remains impenitent in the second degree.

von Rohr: Then what remains for the pastor?

Walther: The pastor also has to judge, yes, he has to go ahead in his judgment, because he has to teach and instruct the others all about the matter as Paul does in 1 Cor. 5; then he has to execute the ban decision publicly by publicly pronouncing and proclaiming the ban on the sinner. When we say that the congregation has to judge, we (here) understand congregations not with exclusion but with inclusion of the pastor, that is to say the congregation and its pastor.

von Rohr: In our banning proceedings we followed the Saxon and Pomeranian church order.

Walther: No, that is precisely what you have not done. For according to these church orders, the right of the binding key is not denied to the congregations in principle; for the same Bugenhagen who drafted the Pomeranian church order also signed the Smalcald Articles, in which the congregation is granted this right. Then these church regulations explicitly state that the decision to ban is to be given by a consistory, i.e. by pastors and laymen who represent the audience; but you have completely excluded the laymen, and this power is reserved only for the

ministerium, i.e. to the pastors. But a ban that is imposed with exclusion of the hearers is according to Luther a sh... ban [*Scheisbann* ([WA 30II, 502, ln 10](#)), or *Scheißbann* ([StL 19, 950, 94](#)): “shit ban”; [AE 40, 371](#): “execrable ban”], i.e. not the ban that Matt. 18 is talking about, even if the person in question is really worthy of the ban because of his sin. Luther says: “The congregation, in dealing with one of its members who is under the ban, should be sure of the reason it thinks him to be deserving of excommunication as the words of Christ in our text direct. (Matt. 18)” [[StL 19, 950, 94](#); [AE 40, 371](#)] But how can the congregation do this, if the sinner is not brought before it, and if the trial is not conducted in its midst?

Here one of the listeners appeared, asked for the floor and testified that he had been banned by the Buffalo ministry during the cent tax dispute and still does not know why, because he had never been admonished and the superiors he asked for could not tell him either.

Walther: That is terrible and quite a false, unjust ban.

von Rohr: If this has happened, it has happened against our order.

But from many sides it was testified that such a thing had happened several times. Many had often been banned on the spot, within a few days, especially if they had previously been considered disobedient to the ministerium.

Walther: Consider the serious, terrible word that Luther calls out to all those who impose a false ban: “Your own conscience will condemn you and say: You have blasphemed God’s name and dishonored the keys, and, in addition, you have done an injustice and violence to your neighbor. You have disturbed his conscience with lies and led him astray, leaving him in error as to his understanding of the keys and causing his spiritual death. What will you then do?” [[StL 19, 950, 93](#); [AE 40, 371](#)]

In the afternoon Pastor von Rohr traveled to Wolcottsville and did not participate in these proceedings; after they were presented to him the following Monday, he declared the following, despite his undoubtedly clamoring conscience, as follows:

With respect to the ban and the office of the keys I acknowledge

the previous doctrine of the Buffalo Synod, as being in accordance with the Word of God and the symbols, as well as to the practice or exercise of our Saxon and Pomeranian church orders, apart from deviations to be shown in individual cases due to weakness or injustice. On the other hand, I recognize the doctrine of the Missouri Synod as entirely new, false and church-dividing.

We continue with the report of the proceedings:

Walther: In 1 Cor. 5 Paul punishes not only the pastor, but the whole congregation in Corinth for not having imposed the ban on the incestuous person, how could he do that if the pastor alone had the jurisdiction? And again, since they are to take up this incestuous person again, he likewise demands not only the pastor, but the whole congregation. He uses the little word *Kuroun*, which according to Chemnitz means to accept something by public, common judgment.

Buffalo: Surely the ban can't be enforced at all by majority vote or proxy?

Missouri: By no means, in matters of doctrine and conscience, the majority of votes does not apply, but only the Word of God. So when the matter has reached the point of exclusion, we hold a poll in the congregational assembly to see whether each individual has now won the conviction that the sinner belongs under the ban. If anyone still has doubts, they are resolved for him, and this process continues until all have gained the same conviction and agree with a firm heart to the same judgment.

Buffalo: Can the ban not be imposed sooner than until everyone is in agreement?

Missouri: No, not before, for if all are to think of him as a heathen and publican, then all who represent the congregation must have the same judgment of him. — What would have been achieved if the ban had been pronounced, but many would not consider the sinner to be worthy of being banned? Would such a ban really make a big impression on the sinners?

Certainly not; if I cut my finger, but it still hangs on by one fourth of its thickness, it is not separated from the body, even though I tried to do so.

Buffalo: But in this way any malicious person or friend and relative of the sinner could prevent the excommunication or at least delay it.

Missouri: Not as easily as it might seem, for if the sin is indeed mortal sin and if the sin is as evident as the sinner's impenitence, and if the pastor and the congregation testify against it in all seriousness, then it takes a very raw and unbelieving mind to publicly support such a sinner; if it does happen, however, such a sinner must be admonished and the other process of banishment must be postponed for the time being. Such unfair fellows, incidentally, are usually revealed soon enough, and then cause little difficulty.

Buffalo: At the very least this makes the process of banning a very slow one.

Missouri: That's true, you won't be able to handle it in a few weeks. But who would want to criticize or lament this, since the Lord Christ Himself has so ordered it, and He knows best how to govern His Church; also the sinner has all the more room for repentance. At last, time and work are not lost, even if it should not help the sinner, because it is precisely with such a conscientious procedure that a congregation learns an immense amount, is powerfully promoted in the knowledge and Christian handling of church discipline; to continue with new seriousness in one's own sanctification seizes one's mind, one becomes aware of the heavy responsibility one has to give to one's fellow Christians, and the ban, when it is finally imposed, will be all the more an earnest, heavy, and blessed rod of discipline. The fact that everyone in the congregation has pronounced the same judgment and understanding will shake the hardened sinner all the more salutarily, and all the more likely will he be moved to repentance.

Buffalo: You said before about mortal sins that it is your opinion that only those should be banished?

Missouri: Indeed, only in the case of mortal sins, i.e. sins where faith cannot stand. It is quite wrong when it says in your Second Synodical Letter that banishment can follow because of all sins. Christ himself indicates which sins can lead to the ban, for when he says in the case of repentance: "Thus you have gained your brother," he indicates that it must be such a sin because of which the brother was lost. No one can justly impose the ban on someone, for example, because he does not accept a cent tax, for the whole Church cannot make a law which binds consciences, let alone a congregation or a pastor. If it could, it would be necessary for the sake of salvation to keep this law, which is contrary to [Article 28 of the Augsburg Confession](#). Where would we end up, if one wanted to start church discipline because of every sin, even for the sins of weakness? There would then be no end in sight, for we sin every hour and every minute; one would finally have to take into church discipline, as Ströbel says, even him who blows his nose too hard and forces blood out, which is also against the fifth commandment. It is just as obvious that sin must be of such a nature that everyone, even the weakest, recognizes it clearly and distinctly as such, and can easily conclude from this that anyone who does such things and is not repentant can no longer be a Christian.

Buffalo: According to this, a lot of sinners could go unpunished!

Missouri: Why not? One should, must and can punish, rebuke and reject all kinds of sins, that is what God's Word commands us to do. Only church discipline cannot and must not begin with every sin; for where the same cannot end with the excommunication if the admonition is to be fruitless, one must not enter into it either, because it would be against all Christian love and wisdom to take a brother to the third degree of admonition and then finally have to declare

that his sin is such a sin, where perhaps faith can still be present and for the sake of which he cannot yet be declared a heathen and a publican and so be put under the ban.

[↑] Finally, the other five Buffalo colloquents presented the following statement on the Office of the Keys.

“The Small Catechism of Luther teaches that the ministry of the keys is the peculiar church power that Christ gave to His Church on earth. Thus also the Smalcald Articles teach *principaliter et immediate*, i.e. originally and without means the Church has the Keys. From this it follows that the congregation in the exercise of the office of the keys is not merely the object of pastoral care, but must itself take an active part in it. Since the public handling of the ban affects the conscience of the whole congregation, the Church has not entrusted it to the holy Ministry alone, but exercises it through herself, as Calov says. — According to Matt. 18 the degrees of admonition must always precede the decision of the ban. But it is not possible for the congregation to admonish without at the same time gaining an inner judgment about the sinner. If the imposition of the ban is to be followed, the pastor should ‘lead the way with his judgment’, as Brochmand writes, and show the congregation the way according to Matt. 18:17 and 1 Cor. 5:4, addressing his congregation: ‘In the name of Jesus Christ the sinner is handed over to Satan. Remove him from your midst! Purge out the old leaven.’ So the judgment of excommunication, as Luther writes on 1 Cor. 5, is to be pronounced with the approval of the believing congregation. The old principle is also rightly cited here: Whatever concerns all shall be done with the consent of all (*quae ad omnes pertinent, cum consensu omnium fieri debent*). In obedience to the Word of Christ, such a decision must always be unanimous. The supreme judge is and always remains the Word of God. A believing congregation must submit to the Word of God, for the decision according to the Word is to be considered the voice of the Church.” — with this

declaration, the colloquents of the Missouri Synod also agreed.

[↑] 4) [The doctrine of the power of the ministerial office in indifferent things](#) also had to be discussed because Pastor Grabau had attacked the Missourians in this part with the following words: “They (the Missourians) teach against the 28th article of the Augsburg Confession, that the congregation is obedient to its pastor only when and insofar as he preaches God’s Word to them; but if he merely admonishes them or demands something in church matters that is not against God’s Word (e.g. a school building), they can refuse to obey.”

The five Buffalo colloquents, with the exception of Pastor von Rohr, made the following statement: “Article 28 of the Augsburg Confession says [[§ 8](#)]: ‘The same power (that is, of the bishops in general) is exercised and practiced solely by the teaching and preaching of the Word of God.’ [[after the German text](#)] And we teach with Luther that one is in duty bound by divine command to obey pastors, who have been called to the ministry of preaching and administering the sacraments, and who therefore proclaim the exalted divine Word, and rightly teach the [Gospel](#) in all matters which the Gospel either commands or forbids, on pain of eternal damnations, according to the passage: ‘[He that heareth you heareth me.](#)’ [[Luke 10:16](#)] — In this divine work the pastor stands in Christ’s place and does not command or forbid for his own person, but as Christ. But it follows from the Word of the Lord, Luke 10:16, how precisely the authority of his servants [[the pastors](#)] is limited, which is why the Apology, when explaining Article 28 of the Augsburg Confession [[§ 18-19](#)] under Article 7 [[? sic](#)], says of abuses: ‘For it is certain that the expression Luke 10:16: ‘He that heareth you heareth Me’, does not speak of traditions [*Menschensatzungen*], but is chiefly directed against traditions. For it is not a *mandatum cum libera* (a bestowal of unlimited authority), as they call it, but it is a *cautio de rato* (a caution concerning something prescribed), namely, concerning the special command [not a free, unlimited order and power, but a limited order namely, not to preach their own word, but God’s Word and the Gospel] ... ‘He that heareth you heareth Me’, cannot be understood of traditions.’ The Apology [[Ap 28. 6, paraphrased](#)] also teaches

from the passage Hebr. 13:17 does not give ‘the bishops their own dominion or authority other than the Gospel’. Our symbols in this are undoubtedly consistent with God's Word. For St. Peter, 1 Pet. 5:1-3, admonishes the elders to feed the flock, but ‘neither as being lords over God's heritage’ (cf. 1 Cor 7:35; 1 Cor 11:34). Luther explains 1 Pet. 5:3 as follows: ‘Preachers must not pretend that the people are under them, for we have one Lord, who is Christ, who rules our souls. The bishops are to do nothing except to feed; they have no power to command one single word, but should be only servants, saying: This says your Lord Christ, therefore you should do this, — as also Luke 22:25-26 teaches.’ Furthermore we read 2 Cor. 8:8 that Paul, while asking the Corinthians for a collection for the poor, says: “I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love.” From this it follows in particular, also where he says ‘And the rest will I set in order when I come’ [[1 Cor. 11:34](#)], that he will not proceed by commanding, but by giving counsel and with the approval of the whole congregation.’ In the following, the expressions of Article 28, which were often misused in the Buffalo Synod, are put into perspective, e.g. when it is said that such an order ought to be maintained for the sake of love and peace, etc., it must be observed that, as [Carpzov](#) says, this is speaking according to the circumstances of that time, because under the obedience which, according to divine right, is due to pastors, Article 28 does not mention anything about human ordinances. This also follows from the word “it fitting or proper” (*convenit*). It was also false to say that ‘the Word of God is part of the church orders, therefore obedience, convinced by the Word of God, is also demanded in indifferent things’ [[or adiaphora](#)]. Indifferent things are just such things which are neither commanded nor forbidden in God's Word, therefore no man, neither ministerium nor synod, can command or forbid in indifferent things, for Christ has redeemed us as from the compulsion and curse of the divine law, so also

from all ceremonial and human laws. Also pleading and pressuring, if it is followed by church discipline and the ban, belongs among the matters of which Luther says [[W^l 16, 1208, 2](#); cf. [StL 16, 1016](#); [AE 49, 386-7](#)]: ‘If they [[bishops](#)] also want to apply force, and compel us to do so, we must not obey, nor consent to it, but rather die; therefore, we cannot grant the bishops, either by ecclesiastical or secular law, the power to command the churches to do a certain thing, no matter how right and godly it may be, because nothing bad must happen for good to come of it.’ Article 28 of the Augsburg Confession does not, therefore, exclude the unanimity of the church with the pastors, but rather, as Carpzov says, includes it, ‘so that such orders are not made without the consensus or against the will of the Church (congregation).’”

After the above declaration was read and accepted, there remained to the discussion

[↑] 5) on [the doctrine of ordination](#). Pastor Grabau had declared ordination for a commanded divine ordinance, which was under divine and apostolic command. In contrast, the Buffalo colloquents (with the exception of Pastor von Rohr) now presented the following as their final conviction: That they recognize in the ordination an action which is not a divine institution, and accordingly does not first make the call a right call, but nevertheless has important reasons for itself, and should not be missing in an orderly way, because it is a public confirmation of the regular call, introduced according to apostolic usage, and therefore should not be omitted without necessity, as then the Smalcald Articles say [[Tr 70](#)]: "The ordination (*ordinatio*) was nothing else (*nil nisi*) than such a ratification," which is repeated by Chemnitz and the other pure teachers.

After eleven days of meetings, the Buffalo Colloquium was concluded with the above statement. A clear protocol containing the final statements of the two colloquents was printed in St. Louis and distributed widely, especially in the congregations of the Buffalo Synod. Meanwhile the diversity of

elements that had been hidden in the Buffalo Synod under Pastor Grabau's governance became apparent. Pastor Grabau himself was re-elected as Senior Minister by the few followers who remained, continued his fanatical opposition and again founded his own small official organ, the so-called *Die Wachende Kirche*, which, however, was not noticed by anyone but his own followers. He died in Buffalo in 1879. Since Pastor von Rohr had already taken a special partisan position during the colloquium, he also formed his own faction by attracting three other Buffalo pastors, to which several more joined in the course of the following years. His previous congregation in [Neu-Bergholz](#) agreed with the result of the Buffalo Colloquium, joined the Missouri Synod, by the greater part, in faith and doctrine and appointed another pastor, W. Weinbach, in his place. Pastor von Rohr died in 1875 in Walwow [[Walmore?](#)], near Neu-Bergholz. After his death, this faction, which had also called itself the Buffalo Synod, was dissolved by a formal resolution. Several others from the previous Buffalo pastors joined the Ohio Synod, as their congregations were inclined to the Missouri Synod, but these pastors themselves did not. [↑] Since it was agreed after the conclusion of the Buffalo Colloquium to call a Buffalo Synod meeting again at the beginning of 1867, twelve pastors and five congregational delegates gathered in the hall of the [Martin Luther College](#) in Buffalo, where the Buffalo Synod used to gather, on February 26, 1867. An invitation had also been extended to the resident Missouri pastors; accordingly, five pastors of the Missouri Synod had appeared as guests. The writer of these lines opened this Tenth convention of the Buffalo Synod with an address in which he demonstrated that faithful Lutherans must value the bond of faith that binds them to like-minded confessors more highly than a mere bond of constitution. Although

Pastor von Rohr, after the first meeting with Prof. Walther, also expressed the hope that the colloquium would lead to a complete understanding and fraternal agreement with the Missouri Synod, he nevertheless withdrew from the midst of the colloquents and declared his doctrinal difference to be church-dividing. We do not want to hate those who leave us as we go our way, nor do we want to let ourselves be misled by them. It is certain, however, that the Lord God is now sweeping the threshing floor in the area of the Buffalo Synod, and that the time has come for everyone to pursue their own convictions in matters of faith. For the time being, the result of the Buffalo Colloquium is available for consideration or acceptance, in the hope that this Synod will find the same to be founded on God's Word and in harmony with the Lutheran symbols. Under the chairmanship of Pastor F. Zeumer, the previous differences in the doctrine of the two synods were reviewed once again in accordance with the present colloquium protocol, and the result of this religious discussion was unanimously accepted by all present. Since Prof. Walther had given a special declaration at the end of the colloquium with regard to those persons who had been transferred from the Buffalo Synod to the Missouri Synod in the course of the past years and had been accepted by it, and had also been provided with pastors, in which it was proved that this separation had been caused by the false doctrines and practices of the Buffalo Synod, this declaration, which is found on p. 29 of the above-mentioned publication, was also examined and recognized and accepted as correct by all synodal members. Since among the guests present from the Missouri Synod there were several pastors who served those opposition congregations, which had until then been looked upon on the part of Buffalo as rabble, these pastors declared that although the ban customary in the Buffalo Synod had not been legitimately enforced, and although the Missouri pastors had been denied access to the documents, it had nevertheless at all times been the

principle of the Missouri Synod to faithfully lead to repentance those who had been banned for real sins when they came to the Missouri pastors, before they were accepted, and that the Missouri pastors nevertheless distinguished between those who deserved to be banned for their sins and those who had not committed a sin worthy of banishment but had nevertheless been banned! Having hereby approved the outcome of the colloquium, this synodical convention took steps to regulate its relationship with the Missouri Synod. It was therefore unanimously decided on February 28 to revoke all joint participation in the false doctrines found in the Buffalo Synod writings, including all abuses with which the Missouri Synod and its teachers had been persecuted up to that time; it was also declared that the Buffalo Synod writings which had been written mainly with the intention of justifying and spreading the above-mentioned false doctrines could not be given more doctrinal credit. On the following day, March 1, 1867, the Missouri pastors reappeared in the midst of this assembly to reconcile themselves with these synodical representatives and to recognize them all as brethren *), whereupon

*) Since in most places around Buffalo and elsewhere the congregations of the mutual synods had been in opposition until then, the task remained to heal the rift that had arisen among the congregations. At the end of the synod, the Buffalo pastors and their congregations usually joined the Missouri Synod, which also initiated the unification of the congregations and put an end to the division in their locality. This happened in the city of Buffalo and other places. These are the names of the twelve pastors who, with the exception of one, joined the Missouri Synod in the course of the next few years after the Buffalo Synod was adjourned indefinitely on March 1, 1867: The late F.G. Zeumer, then E. Leenhuis, Christian Hochstetter, A.G. Döhler, G. Wolläger, Christian Bauer, P. Brand, H. Kanold, G. Runkel, O. Wuest, W. Weinbach, Christian Grossberger.

they mutually exchanged the fraternal kiss and handshake. With heartfelt thanks to God and the request for His blessing on the concluded fraternal union, this session was concluded and the Synod adjourned with the last two verses of the hymn: “All Praise to God, Who Reigns Above” [[“Sei Lob und Ehr dem höchsten Gut” # 350, verse 9 : TLH 19](#)], with the last lines of which this subject may also find its conclusion [[translated](#)]:

God has thought it all out
And everything, everything done right ,
Give Glory to our God!

X. [^]

Pastor Loehe's decline in the Confessions and the emergence of the opposing Iowa Synod. [[Loehe starts deaconess institutes, teaches Chiliasm \(283\)](#)] The [colloquium of representatives of the Iowa Synod and the Missouri Synod \(287\)](#). [[Position on the Confessions \(288\)](#); [what is an “open question” \(290\)](#); [Iowans proven as double-minded, skepticism \(293\)](#); [Chiliasm of Iowa \(295\)](#); [the doctrine of the Antichrist \(298\)](#); [Walther’s great warning on Antichrist \(300\)](#)] **Pastor A. Schieferdecker's former resignation and eventual return to the Missouri Synod. [[Schieferdecker resigns from Iowa Synod \(310\)](#)**

[^]

As the struggle for the pure doctrines of the Church and the holy Ministry drew to a close, some might have expected that a time of peace would now come for the Missouri Synod. Since the Synod was in continuous growth, as early as 1852, at the [sixth annual convention](#), a plan was presented for a division into district synods. Convinced of the already mature unity of spirit and the adequate distribution of gifts and energies in the various districts, it was hoped that this arrangement would have a beneficial influence on the various places and regions where the district synods would meet. After all the congregations had given their approval through their delegates at the [seventh annual convention](#), the Missouri Synod was divided into four districts at the following [eighth annual convention](#) in 1854, and the time and

place for them was arranged so that the general president could attend each district convention, since the presence of the general president of the Synod was considered necessary for each district assembly.

Meanwhile, this synodical convention still had many struggles both internally and externally. When the synod opened the [ninth general synodical convention](#) in Fort Wayne on October 14, 1857, after ten years of existence, from which the pastors and delegates from all districts gathered, the general president, Pastor Wyneken, indicated to the Synod that the deliberation on the doctrine of the Last Things, especially on Chiliasm, would be the first subject of the consultation, because Chiliasm had raised its head in the Western District of the synod with Pastors [A. Schieferdecker](#) and [C. F. Gruber](#) and a part of their congregations. The unity of the Spirit had thereby been disturbed in the Synod, and it was now also necessary to bear witness against such errors, of which several brethren were imprisoned in the Synod.

Moreover, the restored good relationship between the Synod and Pastor [Loehe](#) had already been interrupted some years earlier. Although the delegates of the Missouri Synod, when they bid farewell to Pastor Loehe in Germany, hoped that the threatening break was avoided, the renewed relationship was nevertheless short-lived. It is already noted in the eighth chapter of this writing that Pastors Grabau and von Rohr also traveled to Germany as delegates of their synod in 1853 to win the judgment of the Lutherans there for themselves. Despite the fact that Pastor Grabau had also spoken harsh words against Pastor Loehe in the Buffalo Synodical Letters, the Buffalo delegates nevertheless visited Neuendettelsau with the intention of winning over the Bavarian Lutherans. The emissaries of Loehe had until then all joined the Missouri Synod, and Loehe's [Mitteilungen](#) contained a protest against the fact that those on the side of the Buffalo synod wanted to see in men like Ad. Ernst, Friedrich Lochner, and others, as rabble preachers.

Loeche had also stated that after reading through the travel report of the Missouri delegates, which was written by Prof. Walther, he did not find anything in the same healthy state that he should protest against.

Nevertheless, Pastor Grabau managed to fill Pastor Loeche with mistrust against the Missouri Synod and to draw him more and more to the side of the Buffalo people. Pastor Grabau could personally, as long as he did not have an outburst, make a very winning impression, he knew how to control weak and wavering minds.

Since he was much more interested in a common alliance against the Missouri Synod than in an inner spiritual unity, he managed to get a pact with Pastor Loeche. On November 1, 1853, Pastors Grabau and von Rohr published in their *Informatorium* that as of September 18-21, 1853, they had agreed and reconciled with Pastor Loeche about all previous differences and misunderstandings, harsh words and mutual errors. It is also said there that they sought reconciliation with a penitent heart, but the repentance itself was said to consist in the fact that they (the Buffalo people) realized that they had shouted too loudly under the cruel treatment of their enemies. “If we have suffered injustice,” the statement concluded, “we should have suffered more patiently.”

From that time on, Pastor Loeche intended to found his own synod in North America, whose members were at first inclined to the Buffalo people, but in their doctrine were to seek a mediation between the two synods in dispute, namely between Missouri and Buffalo. The same ambiguous position, which finally led to unionism, Loeche took from now on also within the Bavarian state church. As he had previously protested to the state church against the mixed communion practice and other evils, as reported above (in chapter VIII), he now submitted to the consistory. That he nevertheless clearly recognized how much the [Caesaropapism](#) (prince papacy) [*Fürstpapsterei*] of these prince-bishops, who are partly (as is the case in Bavaria) Roman Catholic, is of evil,

may the following words of Loehe testify: “We want to start off directly from the thing that causes so much hardship and trouble, which one cannot and does not know how to keep, — we mean the supreme episcopacy of the prince. He blackmailed tears enough as long as he was there, and one ought to let it depart without complaint. We don't want to talk about the supreme episcopacy of Roman Catholic princes over Protestant churches, this contradiction is self-evident. — But also the supreme episcopacy of princes of the same religion, what is he, as a spawn of the territorial system? Where has the church ever given the princes anything of the kind the jurists claim? What do the princes have of all this that they did not take, or that would not at least have attracted their temporal power, unconsciously but irresistibly? But if now the principle: *cujus regio ejus religio* (whoever has the country has to decide on the religion of the country) is gone, — if the states of religion say farewell, what do you want with a supreme episcopacy of princes? ... The State fears the Church, it does not want to be influenced by the Church; what guarantees does the Church have that it will not be influenced, oppressed and enslaved by princes and the State, as has ever happened? So why not drop the supreme episcopate and all that is attached to it? With the center, the periphery also disappears. And what are consistories if there is no longer a bishop? Where there is no center, there are no radii. That no longer holds together... but one understands why some people want to cling to it so desperately — the Word is removed from their faith, that the Church rests on a Rock, and that the gates of hell should not overwhelm them, let alone the fall of the supreme episcopacy, with which nothing can fall that cannot be brought back a hundred times over.” [**Wow! Give me the Old Loehe!**]

Pastor Loehe agrees with Luther, who writes: “The bishop as prince is even less able to impose something on the Church; otherwise he will reach into other people's things, and if we let him have his way in this, we would be guilty of the same robbery of the Church.

If they also wanted to go by force and compel us to do so, we must die rather than allow such godlessness, in order to maintain the difference between these two kinds of government”. [[StL 16, 1015](#); cp. [AE 49, 386-7](#)]

Pastor Loehe was not willing to die for this truth, which he had recognized, but from now on he tried to take an outwardly peaceful position. He gave the same instruction from that time on to the emissaries he sent to North America. First of all, he founded a home for pilgrims which, according to the agreement made with the Missourian delegates, would also provide the material for a seminary for school teachers. [G. Grossmann](#), the current president of the Iowa Synod, had therefore settled in Saginaw City in the state of Michigan. As a member of the Saginaw congregation he was then under the pastoral care of the Missourian pastor [Sievers](#). Meanwhile, the dissatisfaction that Loehe was now expressing to the Missouri Synod was also shared with his youngest students. Suddenly, before Pastor Sievers and his members knew it, Grossmann had left Saginaw to found a new synod in Iowa. According to Pastor Loehe's report, two pastors, G. Grossmann and S. Fritschel, united in the city of Dubuque at this point, along with the missionary Schüller, who was joined in fourth place by Pastor J. Dörfler. It is claimed in this report that this Iowa Synod stands peacefully next to Missouri and Buffalo, nevertheless Loehe already questions the good relationship. He thinks Missouri represents the American Lutheran direction, but his Iowa Synod takes the German Lutheran position. If a reader wonders what this means, one learns that the Iowa Synod stands as Loehe stood at the Fuerth Conference (see in Section VIII) [[p. 243-245](#)] between Missouri and Buffalo; there in Fuerth one had argued that the Lutheran symbols were not authoritative in all the points of doctrine they contained, that one should read the symbols according to the Holy Scriptures, and that one should not regard them as the final point in everything. Accordingly, the Iowa Synod also believed that on the basis

of the Lutheran symbols many things still had to be learned and perfected. (The Missouri Synod replied to the Fuerth Conference that honest Lutherans find the only correct understanding of the Holy Scriptures in the Lutheran confessional writings precisely because the symbols already go back to Scripture and contain the Scriptural confession of the true Church).

Pastor Loehe believed that if his friends were to leave the territory of Michigan and move to Iowa, this step would be justified for the sake of peace; unfamiliar with American conditions, he thought that in this way these Iowa congregations could be preserved from direct opposition to the Missouri churches. Nevertheless, the Iowa Synod has from the beginning formed itself as a synod of opposition to the Missouri Synod, and today the Iowa Synod, which has grown considerably through the influx from Germany, counts not only in the state of Iowa, but also in Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, and almost all of the Northwest, among its congregations, which in many places have built their altar opposite the Missouri Synod. Since the friendship maintained with the Buffalo Synod was only apparent, even though there was a mutual exchange of delegates in the beginning, there are also places where these Iowans, who came up later, have established themselves in opposition to both a Missouri and a Buffalo congregation. [↑] While the Iowa Synod is closer to the Buffalo people in its doctrine of the Ministry, later on it had to dissociate with Pastor Grabau, especially on account of the [Chiliasm](#) [[Millennialism](#)] to which it pays homage.

Pastor Loehe had not only lapsed into a busy work life, whereby he adopted the Roman deaconess institutes and hospitals as a model, but also wanted to see a church institute in a kind of extreme unction [[or Roman Anointing of the Sick](#)], which he performed on the sick; he also published a sermon on Phil. 3:10-11, in which he taught that the completion of the church was to be hoped for in a still to be expected millennial kingdom on earth.

In an illness, he writes, the light had dawned on him; he too believed, as the enthusiastic party among the Pietists had taught long before, that by spreading the Chiliastic doctrines, new life would come into Christianity, for only when the Jewish people as a whole would be converted, Christ the Lord would visibly appear for the establishment of this millennial rule of the saints in this world, that the first resurrection of the especially active Christians, long before the last resurrection, will have happened when the supposedly until now still future Antichrist was overcome and Satan was so bound so that he could not tempt people any more, but then things would get better on earth. From this he was so enthusiastic about the Jews that he wished that he might belong to them according to the flesh (on the other hand, see Gal. 3:28). The sainted F. Wyneken rightly exclaims about this aberration that a Lutheran's heart would turn around in his body out of sorrow for this dear man! The same Pastor Loehe, who had previously helped his disciples in their struggle against the syncretistic, monistic [*i.e. unionistic*] synods, now founded an opposition synod which was intended to serve as a counterweight to the Missouri Synod, but in fact had to deviate from the Lutheran Confessions to the same extent that it opposed that synod. Although the Missourians taught at all times that no un-Christian mob should pretend to be the Church, that only the true believers were in possession of the Word and Sacrament, that the Church, as the Smalcald Articles say, was the sheep of Christ hearing the voice of her Shepherd, and that the congregation of the believers is thereby far distinguished from the mass of unbelievers, that only through the confession of pure preaching and the properly administered sacrament does the true church make its appearance — so Pastor Loehe and the founders of the Iowa Synod nevertheless believed that from the beginning they had to take a direction opposite to that of the Missouri Synod. “One thing is certain,” it says already in the first report on the Iowa Synod, “that they

want to oppose the American mob rule in the Church, which under the shield of the spiritual priesthood of all believers could consider itself sanctified, if possible also by means of church rules and statutes.” Even the congregation’s right of the call was restricted as much as possible by the Iowa Synod constitution. It was not considered that the evangelical freedom of Christians and of the congregations was thereby violated, and that it is impossible to enforce, by means of a constitution, the ministering love and the voluntary subordination to a fellow Christian, through which faith is active; such principles and statutes, however, were popular with the state-church members of the Bavarian Society for Inner Mission, and the latter strongly supported the young Iowa Synod with their money. In North America, however, one also wanted to keep up the Lutheran symbols, but to do so in such a way that, apart from the doctrine of Church and Ministry maintained by the Missouri Synod, also another view had the right to exist. The doctrine of the Missouri Synod was the distinctly Lutheran one, because Pastor Loehe and his friends knew very well that not only Luther's writings but also the symbols explicitly declare that the church or congregation, even if only two or three were gathered in the name of Jesus, has the power to elect and ordain church servants precisely because it has the direct and original power to “command to preach the gospel”, and the priesthood. — Although the confession thereby provides an eternally valid proof, taken from Scripture, that the congregation that has the greater thing also is due the lesser thing that follows from it, the Iowans nevertheless believe that such passages should be interpreted “historically” (as directed against the abuses of the time); such demonstrations of proof and explanations contained “subsidiary doctrinal views” which “could just as well be lacking without diminishing the substance of the confession.” In the fifth article of the Augsburg Confession, building blocks were laid for the doctrine of the

Church, however, the theological further development was not yet finished. Only the thetical and antithetical decisions were symbolically fixed and therefore binding. It is clear that a church which wants to know what faith its pastor believes must be increasingly confused, because according to the principles of the Iowans, it does not know what doctrines and how much of the content of the symbols its pastor believes or does not believe.

With regard to Chiliasm, which in Article 17 of the Augsburg Confession is counted among the Jewish opinions and is in principle rejected (as the original Latin text also states), the Missouri Synod proceeded with all caution against those who, though caught up in such errors, were always open to the teaching that the Missouri Synod did not want to presume to have an infallible key for the interpretation of the dark passages which are found, for example, in the Revelation of John [[Rev. 20:1-7](#)], and from which the chiliasts want to base their opinions and hopes. The [[Missouri](#)] Synod rejected only the false interpretation of such prophetic passages, which offends against certain and specific doctrines of faith. In particular, it was explained to Pastor A. Schieferdecker in Altenburg, Perry Co., that the article according to which the Last Day could come at any moment, must not be violated. Otherwise the Lord Christ would not have said: “Watch what I say to you, I say to all, Watch.” [[Mark 13:37](#)] According to the Chiliastic teaching, the Day of Judgement could not come like a thief in the night, because for the time being a thousand years of ambiguity and much more could be expected. Since Pastor Schieferdecker was not able to answer with certainty three of the questions put to him by the general synod in Fort Wayne, he had to resign from the Synod, to the dismay of the entire Synod, after negotiations with him had already been conducted in vain at the Western District synod in Altenburg and at many conferences. Pastor Schieferdecker retained a like-minded portion of his previous congregation when the separation took place,

and established a relationship with this opposition congregation, which built its own church, to the Missouri congregations in Perry County. In 1861 the Iowa Synod gave him a warm welcome, his Chiliasm being recognized by the Iowa Synod, and the gap between the Iowans and Missouri widened. Meanwhile, *Der Lutheraner* published a series of essays under the heading: “[Chiliasm is False](#)” [[1 of 9](#); [search “Chiliasmus ist falsch” here](#)] (by Pastor [H. Fick](#)) and the Iowans not only had watchful neighbors in the Missourians who opposed a further development of Lutheran doctrine leading to its dissolution, but the collapse of the Buffalo Synod, that was in sight, was an example of prudence in the use of hierarchical principles. Prof. S. Fritschel travelled through Germany and the Baltic Sea provinces, asked the Dorpat faculty and other theological figures to give him their expert opinion, and finally the Iowans announced to the Missouri Synod their readiness for a public colloquium.

[↑] [The Colloquium of the Representatives of the Iowa Synod and those of the Synod of Missouri, Ohio and other states](#)

was opened on November 13, 1867 in Milwaukee at the church where Pastor Fr. [Lochner](#) was then serving. The following representatives of the Iowa Synod were present: its President, Inspector G. Grossmann, Prof. [S. Fritschel](#), his brother Prof. [G. Fritschel](#) and the deputy F. R. Becker.

Representatives of the Missouri Synod were present: its then president Prof. Walther, Dr. Sihler, Pastor [J. A. Huegli](#), pastor Chr. Hochstetter *) and four delegates: K. Koch, C. Wassermann, F. R. Stutz and G. Bierlein.

*) Since the delegates to the colloquium held in Milwaukee were chosen from the individual districts of the Missouri Synod, it happened that the then small Eastern District, which in the summer of the same year 1867 had been replaced by several, formerly Buffalo

Since the Missouri Synod had taken offence above all at the Iowa Synod's commitment to Chiliasm, it was considered best on Missouri's part that this point be cleared up first if unity and peace were sought through the Colloquium. The Iowans, especially G. Fritschel, protested against this, partly for the sake of the ordering, partly because it would treat them as non-Lutherans. [↑] Although they were reassured with respect to the latter imputation, the Missourians nevertheless gave in, and the colloquium began with a discussion of "[Position on the Symbols](#)". The Missourians accused the Iowans of saying that it is a dangerous principle to say that the statements and proofs do not belong to the Confessions, insofar as this obliges every pastor: "A pastor's stance must be (W.) that he says: Dear people, you have committed me to the Confessions, I have sworn to teach and preach to you as they teach, for I am convinced that they contain nothing contrary to the teachings of Holy Scripture. But if I ever find that I consider a doctrine of the symbols to be wrong and cannot preach anymore, I promise to resign as an honest man." When it was replied that not every incidental doctrine in the

Pastors and congregations, the writer of these lines was chosen as a delegate for the colloquium. I would still regret today having accepted the call to this important position, for which I already felt incapable because of my previous position, if I had not received great blessing for my person from my participation in this colloquium. It became clear to me there all the more that the strength of the Missouri teachers did not rest both in their attachment to the symbols, but rather in their [fear of God's Word](#)! [[Kramer: respect for the Word of God](#)] Is. 66:2. It was said there: "All that is Biblical is churchly; a doctrine may or may not be contained and fixed in the symbols, if it is only in the Holy Scriptures." The symbols themselves contain only the right confession of Holy Scripture and all its doctrines. While all sorts of [human](#) authorities from old and new times were used in trying to attack the position of the Missouri Synod, it became all the more apparent that the Missourians are in the Scriptures, but their opponents are beside them.

Author's note.

symbols is binding, and it would be wrong to accuse someone who says this of heresy, Prof. Walther replied: This was not called a heresy by us either, but an eternal quarrel and dispute would arise in the Church about what belongs to the essential and what to the unessential, what is binding and what is not binding in the symbols, if one were to declare doctrines in the symbols to be not binding also for the Pastor who subscribes the Confessions. If someone should find a doctrine in the symbols that he does not want to be committed to, he should say so in advance, so that the congregation knows how it is with its pastor. If it were a mere incidental point, such an exception would not be much of a difference.

When an insignificant point (of the perpetual virginity of Mary) was subsequently cited as an example and asked whether such a point was also to be included in the binding character, it was immediately explained that no problems were understood to be included under the binding doctrines of faith. The symbolic books also contain problematic things, i.e. things that are not clearly revealed in God's Word, that is where that example belongs. "We also did not think of including the problems among the less important doctrines. By doctrines we have always understood truths truly revealed in God's Word, nothing else, and God help me that I never forget that everything that which is set before faith as doctrine must be revealed in God's Word, for God's Word is above the Church." (W.) Since the Iowans had promoted Joh. Gerhard to the effect that one could not reach agreement in less important doctrines of faith in this life, Prof. Walther immediately showed that S. Fritschel had omitted the words of Gerhard in his quotation, in which he says that one who is not stubborn and who does not violate the foundation of faith, will therefore not be separated from the body of the church immediately. "It goes without saying (W.) that we do not deny church fellowship to someone who is not yet clear on a less important point." After Missouri once again declared:

“If you exclude as non-binding only that which is not clearly and explicitly revealed in God's Word, we are quite satisfied with it,” *) all the colloquents agreed in the sentence: That everything that is found in the symbols of the doctrines of faith is confessionally binding.”

[↑] Then the negotiation began about what is meant by a problem or by what is an open question, as the Iowans talked about them.

Among the points presented by the Missouri Synod against the Iowa Synod before the start of the negotiations was the following, with respect to the so-called open questions:

“What strikes us here is first of all that those points are declared to be open questions on which no symbolic decisions have yet been laid down in the confessions. Then, that open questions are also called those points which are indeed present in the symbols but have not yet passed through the struggle, in short ‘everything individual, not historically demanded’, especially the doctrines of Church and Ministry and those of the Last Things.” Prof. Walther continues: "We believe that nothing can be an open question that God has already decided in his Word, whether or not it is in the symbols, whether in a conclusion or in a casual remark, because the Mouth of Truth declares that those who are the least in the Kingdom of Heaven, that is, they shall not enter into it, are those who make void the least commandment and teach people thus.” With this we do not mean that if someone considers a doctrine clearly revealed in God's Word to be an open question, this error immediately justifies a division in the Church. We well know that only he can be called a heretic who has been admonished and convinced so that he knows that he has overcome himself in his inner being

*) See: [*Stenographisch aufgezeichnetes Kolloquium der Vertreter der Synode von Iowa und der von Missouri*](#) etc., written and published by J. P. Beyer, Pastor, Chicago, Ill., 1868.

and has condemned himself, — — but we cannot grant that someone may teach somethings contrary to a clear Word of God, and may demand that this be tolerated. — — It seemed to us that you were paying homage to the newer theology, which believes that dogmas are formed only gradually. We therefore do not believe that the other view, as expressed in the Dorpat report, can stand. I cannot believe that the Church makes dogmatic decisions. Many newer theologians say: this matter has not yet been decided, so everyone can believe what he wants. It would be quite terrible for me if the insecure theology of Germany were to be transplanted over here".

S. Fritschel then explained that the reference was made to Dorpat only for the sake of explanation, not to represent Dorpat. *) However, when Prof. Walther said that one should put “problems” in place of the words “open questions”, Grossmann replied: “That does not cover what we understand by open questions.” To which Prof. Walther replied: “Then the matter is not yet clean.” It had now become apparent that the Iowans for such doctrines, where the error cannot be established by the church, because the agreement of the church is missing, or men as J. Gerhard, Rudelbach and other Lutheran teachers deviate from the correct doctrine (e.g. in the doctrine of Sunday) demand a church justification for both opinions! The Iowans said: “The divergent one must have the right to have and express a different conviction” and “the other side must also be entitled to be ecclesiastically justified.” — It was replied that just as Luther did not allow the *naevi* (weaknesses) of the old church fathers [[Augustine](#), [St. Bernard](#), etc.] to be made into articles of faith and rules, so we cannot now allow the *naevi* of our

*) Immediately after this explanation, Pastor Franz Schmidt reported from the middle of the audience that he had received a letter from an Iowa colloquient (G. Fritschel) a fortnight before this one, in which he writes that the Dorpat report describes the standpoint that the Iowans represent. These sought to extricate themselves by the distinction between essential and non-essential.

church fathers [[Gerhard, Rudelbach, etc.](#)] to be made into our norm against Scripture and the Confessions. The doctrine of Sunday is laid down in the symbols as a doctrine of the divine Word, and therefore it is part of what obligates a pastor. When it was said that the clarity of the Scriptures was variable, Prof. Walther replied: “All articles of faith are unmistakably revealed in God's Word, — so that everyone can arrive at to clarity. For God's sake, do not continue to accuse the Holy Scriptures of obscurity because great men have not understood them. The Lutheran Church recognizes with great agreement that God has revealed the pure doctrines brightly and clearly, and only if we hold to this can the foundation of salvation remain firmly established for us.” This is not to say that one who does not fulfil this obligation is an enemy of the Lutheran Church, and there is also a great difference in saying: this one is not a Lutheran, or to say he is an erring Lutheran. At the same time he could still be a Christian. “It is a matter of whether all the doctrines presented by the Holy Scriptures and contained in the symbolic books are also confessionally binding. At the time of the Reformation, this was a major impetus for the Romanists to find so much in the Church Fathers that had been condemned by Luther. This seems to me to be your position in a moderate sense and, frightened by this, you wish, for the sake of the deviations of individuals, that exceptions should be permitted in the symbols. However the exceptions that you permit are also part of the doctrinal norm binding on conscience (*norma docendi*). That is certain for us and we cannot deviate from it. If the same applies to you, then we would be best advised to close the debate on this. But if your decision is different, then you can confess: “Everything that is laid down in the symbols as the doctrine of the divine Word is part of the *norma docendi* (doctrinal norm). If you do that, we are in agreement.” The Iowans did not accept this last suggestion of Prof. Walther, but S. Fritschel said that although he considered the doctrine of

Sunday to be a doctrine of faith, another person did not, so it could be a doctrine of faith, which not all Lutheran teachers consider to be so; and if not all Lutheran theologians accept such a doctrine, then it could not be regarded as something binding in the Lutheran symbols. — [↑] It was now proven to the Iowans that they had now taken back what they admitted the day before. Prof. Walther reproached them: “Yesterday you admitted what is written in God's Word of faith and is found in the symbols, that is symbolically established. Today you admit that the doctrine of Sunday is a doctrine of faith and is found in the symbols, but you do not want it to be symbolically fixed. You are no louder than that! To the sceptics (who doubt the Word of God) it says: The Word is not clear, you may take it this way, I may take it that way. That removes all the foundation under your feet. Not to consider doctrines of faith revealed by God's Word as unifying, and again to dismiss them as undecided — that is skepticism.” — So this difference remained in the negotiations about the position on the symbols, which has already been presented by Professor Walther: It is true that there is a difference between us here; but if you wish to establish the difference, I would ask you not to present it as if we were the rigorous people who could have no patience with the erring, while you, on the other hand, were the lenient ones; but that is the difference: we want a person to be bound by all the doctrines of faith in the symbols, but you want the person bound to be able to exclude this or that. So you say now, for example, that you want the Sunday doctrine to be exempt and you do not know what to do now, but tomorrow you may think of another, and another ten and another twenty. So it is not a single doctrine, but a principle.”

When Prof. Walther called out these words to the Iowans, he already had an idea that the main difference (the point of controversy) that emerged in this first part of the colloquium

would be twisted and distorted by the Iowans within a short time. On November 6, 1868, Gottf. Fritschel presents the point of controversy in the Brobst's *Luth. Zeitschrift* as follows: "The matter (in question) is merely that the Iowans, in regard to the doctrine of Sunday, consider one of the two doctrinal views to be correct, but the other one to be an error, but not a heresy that annuls the church fellowship." ... G. Fritschel presented the Missourians as people who consider and declare the error in the doctrine of Sunday to be a heresy that divides the Church. — So it was in vain that the Missourians had repeatedly (as the above sentences indicate) declared that where a Lutheran was wrong or unclear on a minor point, one would bear with him, but it was a matter of presenting the modern false theory of "open questions" in its dangerous and terrible scope. In [volume 15 of *Lehre und Wehre*, December 1869 \[p. 359-360\]](#), is written by Prof. Walther about Gottf. Fritschel's shameful distortion of the facts, and finally, after citing the Iowan's own words contained in the stenographic protocol, he emphasized: "Everybody sees even by comparison without proof that the Iowans once declared with a full mouth the pure doctrine of Sunday as a doctrine of faith for which they are ready to 'die' because it is clearly and distinctly contained in the Holy Scriptures 'according to their conviction' (p 90), but then to 'set it free' (p. 110) with the same mouth as an open question, as a problematic doctrine, and grant a person who departs from it the right to teach differently (p. 83) because that doctrine is for others not taught 'clearly and unmistakably' (p. 113) in Holy Scripture, and because it is therefore not accepted as a doctrine of faith by great theologians."

It was clear as day that the Iowans, although they had declared unanimously in the sentence: "All the doctrines of faith contained in the symbols are confessionally binding",

had made use of a secret reservation (*reservatio mentalis*); — “so we had to see ourselves betrayed after a short joy over the obtained important *consensus*.” ([Lehre und Wehre December. 1869, p. 358](#)).

After they had agreed in that important sentence to joy of all, Prof. Walther asked already at that time how the earlier statements of the Iowans rhymed with this declaration, e.g. “only the thetic and antithetic decisions form a binding doctrinal norm”. This would have exposed a large number of doctrines of the symbols as indifferent! The Iowans replied that in the past there had been an incomprehensible misunderstanding by the Missourians, “so what more do they want from us?” They had to be content to say that the Iowans had used very tricky expressions. “I tell you, your language seemed to us more often than a means of leading us by the nose.” Now, at the end of the negotiations on the position on the symbols, it became apparent that the Missourians had once again been led by the nose with that declaration of approval.

[↑] In regard to the chiliasm taught by Iowa, it might have seemed that the Iowans were really ready to revoke the monstrosities found in their Synodical Reports of 1858 and 1861, such as: the doctrine of a double visible future return of Christ, of a double resurrection and so forth. When Prof. Walther, at the beginning of the negotiations, wished that we should begin with the chiliasm, because we wanted to enter into the Scriptures, and win the opponents by doing so, because our conscience was not bound by the symbols but by the Scriptures, it seemed as if Professor S. Fritschel agreed for the first time, because he said that he wished to begin with the doctrine of chiliasm, “because we have a lot to take back”; however, after an introductory address by Grossmann, S. Fritschel defined this “taking back” with the following words: “Why should I conceal the fact that we have

written many things about this point which could have been expressed differently.”

With such expectations one entered the negotiations on the Iowa chiliasm. Although the Iowa Synodical Report of 1858, after the reading of the Chiliasm paper, says “A hearty unanimity took place, and the agreement of the whole Synod was perceived in an exceedingly lovely manner”, so it was now emphasized at the Colloquium that already in 1860 the Iowa Synod had declared that it had no synodical chiliasm, to which the Missourians replied, "after 1861 the Synod still speaks of ‘our chiliasm’”. It was said by this that one means that individual members have the chiliasm. The Iowans took back the fact that in that paper it was said: we do not have to proclaim half or partial, but the whole counsel of God, as a highly “misleading” expression.

When they examined what Iowa had said about the nature of the millennial kingdom, Prof. Walther explained: “It is enthusiasm [*Schwärmerei*] to teach that, after Christ has once come into the flesh, there will still be two returns of Christ, namely first of all the return through which the Antichrist is destroyed, some dead persons are resurrected, and the millennial kingdom will begin. Long after this future event, which is to be expected for the time being, Christ would come to judgment! On the other hand is Heb. 9:28 [[from Luther’s German](#)]: “Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many. But at the second time He will appear to those who wait for him for salvation.” Here the Holy Scripture teaches in clear, simple words: There is only a twofold coming of Christ. The one is past, the other, still to be expected, is for salvation. It is also very important that you quote 1 Cor. 15 as proof of your opinion, where it is quite obvious that the future of the Lord for judgment is also mentioned. If you hope for another return, tell us the passage where it is taught. When it was questioned whether such an appearance would be contrary to the analogy of Scripture, the answer was again given:

“No one is allowed to think of anything that is against the Word of Scripture itself: ‘shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation’ [[KJV](#)], and thus also for judgment; therefore no one may add a third appearance without being an enthusiast, which is tantamount to a chiliast in the historical sense. When I say a chiliast, I mean a person who believes that the Lord Christ will come before the Last Day to establish a millennial kingdom. When it was responded that the Iowa men wanted to refrain from all positive statements about the nature of this thousand year reign, the answer was, that by the fact that Iowa Synod men were erroneously applying passages from the Book of Acts to a millennium and that also 1 Cor. 15 was so applied, they were already expressing much that is erroneous about the nature of the millennium, and that in [Article 17 of the Augsburg Confession](#) it is not only the chiliasm of the old Anabaptists that is condemned, but all chiliasm which teaches a twofold return of Christ. The Iowans finally declared that what was still questionable fell under the class of appearances, a (still to be expected) twofold return of Christ was not taught by Scripture. In regard to the double resurrection, the Iowans were reproached: “There is not a word, not a hint, in Scripture that a bodily resurrection should take place before the Last Day. Revelation 20 says [[Rev. 20:4](#)]: ‘Souls of the beheaded,’ but souls are not bodies. Where Scripture speaks of the resurrection of the body, it speaks of a bodily resurrection at the Last Day.”

It was said on this by the Iowa side: “We claim nothing but one possibility,” to which was replied: “How much is not possible! But the question is whether God has said in His Word that we can expect such a resurrection (as the chiliasts expect at the beginning of their supposed millennium).”

In the final statement, the Iowans say

that they have nothing against the passages of Acts chapter 3 about the restoration of all things and Acts 1:6-9 not being extended to a thousand year kingdom. It was replied: “You should not say that you want to give in to us to please us, but from your own conviction.” The Iowans then claimed that the restoration of all things was only understood to mean that the people of Israel would come to faith again. On Acts Chapter 1 it was noted: “As soon as you understand here by the ‘kingdom’ to be established the millennial kingdom, you must think here of a separate kingdom of Israel, and that would be false; although it has been repeatedly declared by the Missourians that a general conversion of the Jews, as far as it is compatible with the proper economy of the kingdom of grace, is gladly counted among the problems. But it must not be taught in the sense that Christ wants to establish a Jewish theocracy on earth. If the article about the uncertain return of Christ at the judgment (which could happen any minute now) is not violated by this, then also the hope of better times than those assumed to be problematic would also be permissible. Such a problematic hope would then no longer be a chiliasm in the historical sense, the Missourians declared, in order not to brand anyone as a heretic.”

[↑] But the fact that in the doctrine of the Last Things there still remained a significant difference in doctrine was shown in the doctrine of the Antichrist.

The Iowans do not deny that the papacy is anti-Christian (in the general sense), but they teach among other things: “This apostasy in anti-Christianity is something we must also expect in the future, because we cannot understand by the man of sin a papacy, but only a certain, individual, human personality.” Furthermore: “But the man of sin mentioned in 2 Thess. 2 [2 [Thess. 2:3-10](#)] is a certain human personality, but for this very reason also in the future.” — It is therefore denied here what the Smalcald Articles say in Article 4, part 3 under the heading “Of the Papacy”: “This teaching shows

forcefully that the Pope is the very Antichrist (*ipsum verum Antichristum*), who has exalted himself above, and opposed himself against Christ because he will not permit Christians to be saved without his power, which, nevertheless, is nothing, etc. This is, properly speaking to exalt himself above all that is called God as Paul says, 2 Thess. 2:4 ... Therefore, just as little as we can worship the devil himself as Lord and God, we can endure his apostle, the Pope, or (*seu*) Antichrist, in his rule as head or lord. For to lie and to kill, and to destroy body and soul eternally, that is wherein his papal government really consists, as I have very clearly shown in many books.” [[SA 2, 4: 10-11, 14](#)] It also says in the appendix to the Smalcald Articles [[Treatise, from the German](#)]: “In the same way all vices, as prophesied in the Holy Scriptures, rhyme with the Pope's kingdom and its members according to 2 Thess. 2:4. [[Tr 39](#)] — In Luther's last writing “[Against the Roman Papacy, an Institution of the Devil](#)” [[AE 41](#), 257-376] is his legacy to Christians: “I mock only with my feeble mockery that those who live now and come after us should know what I thought of the Pope, the accursed Antichrist, and whoever wants to be a Christian let himself be admonished before such abomination.” This is Luther's verdict on the Pope, which we Missourians wholeheartedly endorse because, as we go through history, we see that every word of Scripture about the Antichrist finds its full fulfillment in the Papacy. In him, the Kingdom of Heaven is closed to Christians by his false doctrine, by saying that he alone has the power of the keys which Christ gave to his Church, by the fact that he has forbidden the Bible to the laity and has put all hearts in terror with his man-made commandments. Whoever does not hold with him, he says, is lost. — How is it possible that anyone can still doubt it? This is the Antichrist and God has revealed him! That is why Luther already wrote in 1522: “Therefore you should also know that the Pope is the right, true, final

Antichrist, of this all Christianity speaks, whom the Lord Jesus has begun to kill with the Spirit of His mouth, and will soon destroy and strangle with the light of His return, which we are waiting for.”

It is clear that in the confessional writings and in the last quote the Pope is mentioned as the real and final Antichrist described in 2 Thess. 2, but nevertheless S. Fritschel began to say: “Although you have quite rightly set apart the teaching of our confessional writings, this does not prevent us from seeing this passage, 2 Thess. 2, as describing an individual person. And even if everything that has been prophesied of the Pope is true, this cannot blind us to the fact that we are not seeing that we are talking about a (future) individual. The Pope can really be called the Antichrist, but this does not cancel out that this body can still grow a point or a horn, and it is a terrible injustice against us to say that we deviate with this assumption of ours from the doctrine of the church. The Missourians always cry out: ‘The Pope is the Antichrist’, and fail to recognize how much historical Christianity is left to the Papacy in comparison with unbelievers and scoffers.” — Challenged to prove that the Antichrist is not a collective person, but a future individual yet to be expected (which is why the prophesied apostasy is still to come), the Iowans replied that they had no time for this on that evening of November 18th, but Dr. v. Harless wrote — — — — (von Harless does not start from the chief place, but from John 2:18); so again a human authority was attracted as conclusive. Prof. Walther reminded them of this: “It is well known, gentlemen, that in the Lutheran Church all faithful teachers call that Antichrist, who was supposed to be an individual, a utopian Antichrist; but it is irrelevant that orthodox theologians should add others than the Pope.” — [[↑](#)] Walther emphasized the main point: “The question is whether the Pope is the real Antichrist, or whether something must first be added to this that

he may become the Antichrist? The question is whether he is already here, or whether it is true what the Iowa Synod says that he is still to be expected, because the apostasy is not yet here. For God's sake, one should not say that! After the papacy has been developing for a thousand years, it is a truly satanic trick (a ruse) that now the doctrine has arisen in Christianity, that the Antichrist is not yet here. Now Christianity is waiting for an enemy who has long since devastated it. Consider, if we take 2 Thess. 2 and hold the Pope against it, we must say that all signs are found in him; and yet he shall yet come! Yes, the enemy will take care to be seen again in the clothes in which he is already exposed. Think what a great seduction it would be now if a single person came and wanted to play the comedy again. They would do bad business after the good God has revealed the Antichrist through Luther. Those who say that the Antichrist is not yet here, deprive Christians of the salutary fear that the apostle wanted to ignite in the hearts of the Christians. Hellish powers really are there where Lutheran pastors, who have the call to teach what God revealed to the world through Luther, contradict the whole Reformation. God has spoken, has spoken by deeds, and we want to keep silent; do we want to make people secure? Don't say that we teach that as well, no, you don't see the greatest danger, you don't warn against it, it is not yet there after you. Are you not afraid of the souls that you could make secure, and so drive them into the nets of the papacy and thus into their ruin? Every heretic, every enthusiast says: Look into the Bible, only the cursed pope says: Do not look into the Bible, the Scriptures are dark, if I have decreed it, then it is an article of faith. Whoever does not believe what I have decreed is lost. Now God has revealed him as the right Antichrist, and you want to take that away from Christianity? Ah! God would bring you back from this error.”

Inspector [Grossmann](#) then told of a conversation he had had with a Missourian pastor and said at the end of his address that the papacy was leaning more and more towards evil. [S. Fritschel](#) was offended and exclaimed: I hold you responsible before the living God for having slandered us. From this Prof. Walther answered: “So I must not warn you? You take this as an act of hostility? Oh, you do not know how it is for a Lutheran heart that fears danger for pure doctrine. Oh, it is not hostility that I have spoken in this way, I only wish to show you the way back by such testimony of truth. What you say about unbelievers (see above) does not fit in here at all. The Holy Scriptures have also revealed that mockers will also come. The specific feature of the Antichrist is that he sits in the temple of God, and that he mingles with the Christians! Unbelief says: “Where is the promise of his return?” The Pope gives poison to the Christians instead of the bread of life! Also do not believe that we say that the scoffers are not so dangerous, but we tell the people as far as our voice can reach them: There are two dangers, one from the papacy, the other from the scoffers, so we must be vigilant! It means to preach the one and not to keep silent about the other. I am convinced that you are in a great deception. I am not saying that you are drawing souls over to the Pope, but they will go over without wanting to, because you are expecting another, greater danger. Even the gentle [Spener](#) says, and you know it well: “To please the papacy we cannot let any article of our faith go as that would mean being disloyal to the truth itself, which is undivided, a whole; so we cannot give up or abandon this part of our doctrine either, that the Pope is the Antichrist, in whose knowledge (after others have already declared him to be so long ago) the Reformation has strengthened us, and we are right not to resign (Spener’s

Reformation sermon of the year 1788).” Furthermore, in an earlier sermon on the Day of Penitence and Prayer, he refers to the fact that this point of doctrine is not only taught in the private writings of theologians, but is also expressly contained in the Smalcald Articles, which are a part of our Church's general Confessions. *) Now we know that our Lutheran theologians mean to say that this is a collective concept and not an individual person. — Inspector Grossmann was now again aiming at the fact that they, the Iowans, should be branded as heretics by the Missourians for the sake of this difference, of which Prof. Walther finally said: “You do not believe what is written in the symbols; the fact remains that in your publications the sentence is written: the Antichrist is still to be expected.”

Since also the final declaration of the Iowans concludes with the reproach that the Missourians thereby committed a grave irresponsible sin of terrible consequence, that they for the sake of the difference in the doctrine of the Antichrist deny the Iowans church fellowship, the representatives of the Missouri Synod finally declare: “Insofar as the Iowa Synod does not define and roundly revoke what it says about this in its publications of 1858, that 2 Thess. 2 is to be understood as a certain individual human personality, which for this very reason is also to be understood in the future, that one must also expect the apostasy in anti-Christianity in the future — —, we cannot concede to it that it is faithful in this point. This alone, however, is by no means, as our opponents state, the reason why we cannot stand, confess, work and fight with her in the church, but rather other well-known differences, some of which have not been compensated either by a Reformation sermon of the year 1788 round revocation or by a round confession, and some of which

*) In the same place [Spener](#) preaches: “Whoever does not recognize the papal kingdom for the antichristian kingdom is not yet standing so firmly that he could not be misled into it, but whoever finds himself convinced of this in his heart will be quite secure from falling away.”

have not yet been discussed due to lack of time (concerning the power and the Office of the Keys was not officially discussed). However, after the approach that has already been made, we are by no means giving up hope for the future; God grant that a churchly agreement will soon be reached.” —

With these final statements, this colloquium came to an end.

The colloquents on the part of the Missouri Synod, of course, had to fight on and on, fidelity to God's Word suffered no differently, but they were filled with more hope in the beginning than they were in the end. The Church is not served by political treaty stipulations, therefore Professor Walther repeatedly declared: “We want to achieve complete unity, we want to win you! What jubilation it would be, what a blessing for the Church, if we could reach out our hands to one another and henceforth work together in complete unity of faith!” But what was the purpose that the representatives of Iowa pursued? Firstly, as Inspector Grossmann said in one place, to justify themselves with respect to the suspicions to which they had been subjected and, accordingly, to clarify their position; secondly, to present the Missourians as such people, who wanted to brand anyone who differed from them on a minor point as a heretic! The fact that the Missourians nevertheless still talk about an approach in the final declaration was certainly a surprise to many. The essays of G. Fritschel in the Brobst's *Monatshefte* that were touched upon above quickly ruined the approach. The close relationship that exists, for example, between Petersen, who was once removed from his office for the sake of his chiliasm, and the chiliasts of Neuendettelsau, has been proven, and an honored correspondent in *Lehre und Wehre*, who traces the history of the Iowa Synod up to the year [1875, writes in No. 10, Vol. 21](#): already in the first sentence of the proceedings of the Iowa Synod meeting at the end of May 1875 one had argued that the Synod leaves room for such theological

opinions as Chiliasm and the conversion of the Jews, and that it also gave room for other opinions. It was left up to each person to decide for himself, so it is still the case today that one can teach chiliasm from one pulpit in the Iowa Synod and reject it from the other. Only in one respect did they agree that it was a grave sin to include any such doctrine (as, in their opinion, chiliasm is) among the doctrines of faith that determine church fellowship; and that is basically, continues the correspondent, the old aversion and enmity against orthodoxy, which is peculiar to chiliasm. Already since the time of [Urbanus Rhegius](#), the Lutheran Church treated those teachings of Chiliasm as a prophecy not according to the analogy to faith, Rome. 12:7. — “Chiliasm cannot be public teaching (*doctrina publica*) without the Lutheran Church denying its character. Whoever wants to make it a *doctrina publica*, or allows it to be granted as such (as the Iowa Synod does), thereby causes the separation of the Church from the orthodox Church, which may have patience with the erring, but can never grant a right to error. — “But the doctrine of the personal (future) Antichrist is closely connected with chiliasm. — For the personal Antichrist, whom the chiliasts expect, will appear before the Millennium (their millennial kingdom), and must therefore first be annihilated; consequently, it cannot be the Pope (who is not so bad, so the Iowans think). The antichiliasm Lutherans now have every reason to hold to the doctrine of the papacy as the collective Antichrist, when they consider that this doctrine is objected to in favor of the enthusiastic chiliasm. But there are even deeper reasons not to give this doctrine away. The Reformation is from God through the Word of God. But the papacy is the negation (denial) of the Reformation and its divine principles. It rose up against them and thus against God, not only with word and writing, but also with fire and sword. This made it

certain that the prophecy of Paul was fulfilled by the Antichrist, an interpretation that is often found before the Reformation (e.g. in [Wycliffe](#)). This insight became a general one in the church. There is ample evidence for this in [Seckendorf's history of the Reformation](#). The faithful dogmatics hold to the Reformation interpretation; it has not been refuted by history, but only confirmed. Yet this interpretation of the Antichrist is not itself a prophecy, but it only sees the fulfillment of prophecy (to which this is added), as the Church always sees it. This is how Peter sees it in Acts 2:16. If it is said that the Pope is not monstrous enough, we ask just where does 2 Thess. 2 fit in, if not on the papacy? Moreover, the Antichrist of the orthodox Church is here; but the monster of Chiliasm does not appear; so the Church also has the inner hidden glory, but that of the Millennium (the Millennial Kingdom) is awaited in vain! In the following it is emphasized that the doctrine of the Antichrist is connected and intertwined with the enlightenment given by God, and is laid down in the Confessions of the Church, therefore Hebr. 10:2, applies here. Once a truth has been recognized, it must not be abandoned, whether it is of primary or secondary *) nature. Just as the enlightenment through the

*) The doctrine of the Antichrist, taken in the strict sense, is not usually considered to be a primary or secondary article of faith. But this does not detract from the importance of this doctrine, for it is clearly revealed in 2 Thess. 2. It is not only a conclusion from history, but from the historically fulfilled Scriptures. All the signs given will be fully found only in the Pope, in him however completely. That is why Scripture did not have to say first with explicit words: The Pope is the Antichrist! Jesus of Nazareth, too, had to be recognized as the true Messiah because all the characteristics were found in Him which the Messiah was supposed to have according to the Old Testament prophecies, since God did not want to call out to everyone from heaven: This is my beloved Son! Before there was an Antichrist in the true sense, it was not necessary to know that there was one and who he was. But when the Antichrist arose, the Church of God immediately realized that the

Word is always the same, so the Church must always look at the abominations of the Antichrist with the same eye and — remember Luther's admonition: God fill you with hatred for the Pope! —

Such demonstrations of proof are admittedly not very popular in Germany today. There one is rather accustomed to think that it was forgivable for a Luther to call the Pope the Antichrist in the heat of his struggle; nowadays it is only the Missourians who bring forth such a warmed-over quirk from the old dogmatics! But isn't the papacy today just the same with its claims and its propaganda? Hasn't the dogma of infallibility only made it more acute? What North America has to expect from the Pope may be indicated by the statement below, which comes from the pen of a Roman church prelate who was recently transferred from St. Louis to Philadelphia. *) Although people in

Pope at Rome was it, and Luther and the old theologians proved it powerfully. Dannhauer is right to say: “Either no Antichrist will come, or it will be he who presides over Rome, to whom all marks fit.”

*) In the following way the *[Shepherd of the Valley](#)*, a Roman publication in St. Louis and the organ of the bishop of this diocese, shows its true color:

“We confess that the Roman Catholic Church is intolerant — that is, it uses all means within its power to eradicate heresy and sin; but its intolerance is the logical and necessary consequence of its infallibility. She alone has the right to be intolerant, for she alone has the truth. The Church tolerates heretics where she is compelled to do so, but she hates them with a mortal hatred, and uses all her power to ensure their extermination. Once the Catholics here in this country will be in the possession of a significant majority, — which will certainly be the case in time, although it may be a long time coming, then we must end religious freedom in this Republic of the United States. Our enemies say so, and we believe them. Our enemies know that we do not pretend to be better than our church, and for that matter, their history lies openly before all eyes. So they know how the Roman Church has dealt with the

Germany are no longer accustomed to such clear language, where recently the Roman Catholics only regretted that Luther had not received his deserved punishment, the St. Louis [Shepherd of the Valley](#) agrees entirely with the propositions of the well-known [Syllabus \[of Pius IX\]](#). — The Roman clerical party is well organized, it knows what it wants, and like petrels the Jesuits circle the German Empire! But where are the spiritual weapons with which the papacy was once so successfully fought and laid down in many places? On the Protestant side it is believed to do more necessary things now, when one tries to develop dogmas and “theological opinions”. This modern scholarliness of the newer theologians does not frighten the papacy. Twenty years ago a [Doellinger](#) praised the great influence of the Roman priests and bishops on their people, whereas the Protestant Church is in alienation from its pastors. Among all the well-known German theologians, there was no longer a Protestant teacher who found his faith in the Lutheran symbols! Even the Lutheran doctrine of justification has been abandoned by today's theologians in Germany! And yet the simple-minded preaching of righteousness that we have in Christ is, as Luther said, the main means against the Pope. But whoever breaks away from the pure Lutheran Church and diminishes its doctrines, works into the hands of the Pope. That is why Cardinals [Manning](#) and [Newman](#)

heretics in the Middle Ages and how she deals with them today, wherever she has the power. We do not think of denying these historical facts any more than we think of rebuking the saints of God and the princes of the Church for what they have done and approved in this respect.” —

So much for the Roman Catholic paper. It would be good if people who see in the papal party a dear sister church, as is the case in Germany with many Protestant pastors, could recognize from such pronouncements that the pope still resembles the bear-wolf that lies on man, as Luther writes of papal tyranny.

now boast that Protestantism is a thing of the past, that it exists only as a political power and not as a definable confession in which the masses agree. Döllinger thinks that the disruption and decay of the Protestant conditions have led to the fact that one imagines a future church of its own kind, namely a modern millennial empire! In the desperation in which Protestantism finds itself is expressed. — But it is also to be feared that the desperation which seizes some minds where they have lost their firm hold on the Word of God, where indifferentism and the lukewarmness toward the Confessions is rampant, will finally lead many a soul to the Roman priests, because they are the ones who claim an infallible authority. The newer, insecure theology, which abandons the legacy of the Reformation, is powerless against such enemies. Even a syncretistic synod like the Iowans is unable to fight the papacy in the footsteps and armor of Luther. From the time he drew back from the Missouri Synod, Pastor Loehe was in the habit of flirting with the papacy so often and praising the Roman founders of religious orders and saints so highly that the Lutheran Dean St. [?] felt compelled to reprove him on this account. While the Missouri Synod is accused of traditionalism and repristination of the old, the Iowa Synod holds the newer tradition, which comes from Neuendettelsau, all the more firmly. “May they listen to the spirit of Paul, and not to the dead of Neuendettelsau,” and as long as the Iowa Synod does not comply with this wish of that reviewer, the judgment of Dr. Sihler, who also was a participant in the colloquium at Milwaukee, will still be valid: “This pseudo-Lutheran synod, from which, however, several members resigned for the sake of conscience, still insists on its rocking back and forth, in its slippery ‘yes and no’ theology, in its lax attitude to the confessional writings and in its acceptance of the so-called ‘open questions’ contrary to Scripture. It is and remains a copy of Loehe's later erroneous views.”

[↑] [Pastor A. Schieferdecker's resignation from the Iowa Synod and return to the Missouri Synod.](#)

For all the dexterity which the Iowa's spokesmen employed both at the colloquium and elsewhere, a certain lack in them became apparent, which was bound to become increasingly offensive to honest minds, the lack of truthfulness. — In the opinion of the founder of the Iowa Synod, it should be a corrective to the Missouri Synod. It turned out the opposite, however, and instead of developing some doctrine, as the Iowans first had in mind, the Iowans needed to be corrected and return to the old Lutheran faithfulness. If the Iowans had only openly confessed this, the special position which Iowa had taken against Missouri from the beginning, because it was supposed to represent the direction of Neuendettelsau in the doctrine of the Last Things, of Church and Ministry, etc., would have had to cease of its own accord.

This is what Pastor A. Schieferdecker irrefutably reproaches the synod with in his statement, first published in *Der Lutheraner*, [My Resignation from the Iowa Synod \[p. 113 ff.\]](#), subsequently as [a tract](#). Although it might have seemed that the Milwaukee colloquium was unsuccessful, a number of Iowan pastors appeared at subsequent synodical meetings demanding unreserved commitment to the Lutheran symbols and protesting against the fickle, uncertain position of the voting leaders and the Iowa Synod in general. Eventually, Pastors W. [Vomhof](#), A. G. [Doehler](#), and others, along with Pastor Schieferdecker, resigned from the Iowa Synod and moved partly to the Missouri Synod and partly to the Wisconsin Synod. Pastor Schieferdecker had already declared when he had to leave the Missouri Synod in 1857 because of his position at that time, that as soon as he came to a different conviction, he would confess to it. He also did not shy away from making a public statement, in the beginning of the

the 1870s in *Der Lutheraner*, at the very beginning: “I must first confess that I was in error when I thought that the prophecy in question, Rev. 20 of the millennial reign of the saints with Christ, was to be interpreted as an intermediate realm, between the present kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory, that it would be as a precursor to the latter. It mixed into each other, in this conception, what must be separated quite strictly here on earth to preserve the right doctrine of the kingdom of Christ. For as different as the cross and the crown are from the state of Christ's humiliation from the state of his exaltation, so different is the kingdom of the cross and the kingdom of glory; Scripture knows nothing of a middle kingdom, which would be partly still the kingdom of the cross and partly already the kingdom of glory.” This unclear, erroneous conception, together with the error in regard to the general resurrection on the Last Day, which was proved by John 5:28; 2 Tim. 4:8 and most definitely by John 6:39, 40:44, in connection with the error concerning a twofold return of Christ had to come to light in his earlier answers to the questions put to him in Fort Wayne; but he now renounces his earlier Chiliastic errors out of an innermost conviction. — Furthermore [Schieferdecker declares], the Iowa Synod had deceived itself into believing that by drawing up these chiliastic doctrines it had initiated a further development of the doctrine with the aid of the Word of God, etc., when first of all, this chiliasm was not something new, and secondly, this supposed development of the doctrine by God's guidance had to be reversed. Gradually the retreat had been initiated. “It was the same with the doctrines of church and ministry.” Here too the Iowa Synod had become entangled in the most obvious contradictions. — Therefore, it would have been the duty of the Iowa Synod to seriously ask itself the question whether it was really right in its fight against Missouri, or whether it had not itself originally paid homage to a false principle! If she had not deliberately wanted to deceive herself,

she should have seen that she had been forced to make some considerable concessions, especially in the battle with Missouri. The Iowa Synod, too, had been clearly proved in *Der Lutheraner* that in the past they had taught and spoken differently in some matters than they do now; that it was wrong and dishonest to try to cover up errors that had been made in the past by saying that they had been misunderstood, that they had not had this or that opinion, since it was clearly visible in the earlier writings. The Iowa Synod was also reproached with the same thing, not only by its opponents, the Missourians, but also by its friends and fathers in Neuendettelsau under a different point of view. — Since the Iowa Synod had nevertheless preferred to insist on its self-contradiction, to confess in one breath to the whole faith and doctrinal content of the symbols, and to still hold on to certain doctrinal opinions, which were not at all correct with the doctrines of the symbols and the fathers, Schieferdecker had to declare his withdrawal. In the end, to be safe, it was declared that the Synod had not made any substantial change in its position toward the Confessions, and that he and all those with him were deeply saddened by this. They would have welcomed it with joy and thanksgiving toward God as progress for the better if the Iowa Synod returned to a clear and simple confession of the symbols. But it has been shown that the leaders of the synod do not act for reasons of conscience, but out of other human considerations. Also at the Iowa Synodical convention held in Madison, so Schieferdecker says, truth and honesty had demanded an unapologetic confession, whereby one had renounced the former direction as a wrong one, but this had not taken place despite repeated, urgent demands of members of the Synod. Since one had never dismissed the errors by a revocation, but had only tried to give them a more comfortable interpretation, these causes (six causes are given against the Iowa Synod) led him and others to leave the Iowa Synod in peace, rather than

to remain in it under the consciousness of an inner, irreconcilable dissent (a difference in doctrine). *)

The deviations from the Confessions of the Church and the whole special position of the Iowa Synod were a fruit of the false idea, as if the Lutheran Church needed a doctrinal development, which had not yet come to an end with the Reformation, etc. Pastor [Schieferdecker](#), on the other hand, testifies: “Luther did not intend to develop any doctrine during his Reformation, but only to purify the corrupt Church from the leaven of the false godless doctrine of the Pope. To set a doctrinal development as a goal is the very dangerous, unholy principle of modern theology, which with its results has only decomposed and corrupted the pure doctrine handed down from the fathers.” — On the other hand, in relation to the Missouri Synod, loyalty to the Confessions could not be the cause whereby the Iowa Synod could be prevented from church union with the Missouri Synod. Even its opponents give it the most honorable testimony in this regard. A testimony is quoted on this in the memorial of Inspector [Bauer](#), in which it says at the end: “The most beautiful testimony is given by the [Kirchliche Mitteilungen](#) published in Neundettelsau with the words: ‘The Missouri Synod represents the conscience of the Lutheran Church in the matter of confessional loyalty. We give it this recognition without any reservation’.”

*) The opponents of the Missouri Synod often reproached it for having been too harsh in the past against Pastor Schieferdecker, who had only had Chiliastic views. However, P. G. Schieferdecker would hardly have come to the full realization of the truth, if the Missouri Synod had kept silent about his mistakes at that time. It is precisely because he often characterized his chiliasm as a mere opinion that he should not have caused a schism for the sake of an uncertain opinion. This is especially reproached to him in the open letter of Prof. Walther, which is printed on [pages 255-270 in Pastor F. Köstering's History of the Emigration of the Saxon Lutherans](#). In this heart-winning letter, Prof. Walther addressed Pastor Schieferdecker as his “still dear old friend!” And now the friendship is also completely restored.

After Pastor Schieferdecker had asked the Iowans once again to examine their position with a rather sober and unprejudiced look to see if it was really tenable according to God's Word and our Confessions, he concludes with the wish, which the readers of these lines will also agree with: May it please the infinite mercy of God to give the Lutheran Church in this country ever more unity in the truth! Amen.

XI. [^]

The Fourteenth Convention of the General Missouri Synod at Fort Wayne in 1869, [where the doctrine of usury was discussed](#) (314). [[Theses on Usury presented](#) (316)] [The Jubilee Synod in St. Louis in 1872](#) (319). The [founding of the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference in the same year.](#) (323) [[First of free conferences, 1856](#) (323); [Thesis 6, confession and practice](#) (327); [Thesis 8, contradictions in confession & practice](#) (330); [Ohio Synod and secret societies](#) (331); [Ohio joins Synodical Conference](#) (336); [Ohio agrees to 1877 Missouri doctrine of Election of Grace](#) (337); [Prof. Schmidt starts Election Controversy](#) (338)] The Separation of the Ohio Synod [[Ohio/Loy in 1881 overturn Election](#) (339);] and [the latest doctrinal position of that Synod](#) (345). [[Walther's sharp rebuke](#) (347); [Scripture Principle alone](#) (350)] [^]

[[↑]] Since to this day the opinion prevails among the United-minded [[favoring union of Lutherans and Reformed](#)], as if a faithful adherence to the Confessions, insofar as this is meant above all to be a common agreement to all Lutheran doctrines of faith, must be harmful to the growth and existence of an ecclesiastical association, some people were already waiting at the end of the 1860s for the Missouri Synod to split up and dissolve as a result. After the old Buffalo Synod, whose common bond had been primarily the narrow ministerial constitution and the authority of the senior minister, had disintegrated into its various elements, the opponents of the Missouri Synod believed that there would now be at least a crisis for it, since there was no lack of dangerous signs. For in the Eastern District of the synod, especially in the New York congregation formerly served by Pastor Th. Brohm, a contradiction had arisen against the doctrine of usury, which

some pastors had joined, and it was therefore considered necessary to make this doctrine the main subject of the doctrinal proceedings when the Fourteenth Convention of the General German Evangelical-Lutheran Synod of Missouri was opened in Fort Wayne, Ind. on September 1, 1869.

The sainted Pastor Brohm elaborated the “[Theses on the Question of Usury](#)” [[German original](#), [English translation](#)] as the subject of the doctrinal proceedings for these sessions, and it was noted at the outset that for some time now the question of whether lending money on interest is sin or not had come to the fore within the Synod. Some consider only the taking of interest from poor people or the taking of interest exceeding the legal interest rate to be sinful. This difference in conviction is, however, not insignificant. — Some claim that all usury is against love and is therefore forbidden; others say that only usury against love is forbidden. After it was observed that this was not an article of faith, it was further stated that the question at issue was not unimportant, since “on the one hand it is very close to Christian life, and on the other it concerns a doctrine which is clearly contained in Sacred Scripture. No question which God has answered us clearly and unambiguously in His Word can be considered unimportant, much less an ‘open’ question. The command of Eph. 4:3-5 makes it our duty, even in such doctrines, if we do not yet agree, to become ever more united by the grace of God. To this end, love makes it our duty to help the erring. — Moreover, since this very question of taking interest and lending money on interest would be burning on the conscience, one would know that the old Adam would be attacked in a very sensitive way by this doctrine.” Some people who want to act conscientiously are disturbed and oppressed by the doctrine of usury. Although those Christians disagree with us

on the doctrines of usury, we should consider them as our brothers and treat them as such, for we know that they err out of weakness. — — As decidedly we condemn the theory of “open questions”, so decidedly we condemn the tyranny of consciences. When asked how we differ from the United Church people and from those who profess the theory of the “open questions”, the following answer was given: — — The United Church people claim that for the sake of love one must tolerate certain errors, whereas according to the theory of the open questions it is said: There are certain doctrines which, though expressed in clear words in the Scriptures, are not valid until the Church has spoken. We reject this theory because it puts the Church in the place of Holy Scripture. (See the proceedings of the colloquium with the Iowans). — — As for the doctrine of usury, too, we fight against error with all seriousness, but we are aware that we must not proceed in a stormy and unloving manner.

Furthermore it was noted in § 3: Not the prevailing custom sanctioned by a hundred years of use, not pecuniary advantages or disadvantages, not the sayings and authorities of people, neither those of a Luther or Chemnitz, nor those of an [Andreae](#) or Gerhard, but only the Holy Scriptures must be the standard by which we measure this doctrine. Nor should we use all sorts of casuistic questions as a principle, but rather these should be judged and answered according to the principle. After that the discussion of the theses themselves proceeded:

[\[↑\]](#) [Thesis I.](#)

“The guiding principle which orders and governs the Christian's conduct toward his neighbor is the commandment of charity: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The correct interpretation of this commandment is: Whatever you want people to do to you, do that to them.”

It was noted that this interpretation is completely false: Love thyself, then love thy neighbor. What a false interpretation is given in the statements: “Everyone is his own neighbor” or “Love begins with oneself”. True love of neighbor does not seek its own, but that of the other person. Phil. 3:4. Love does not do evil to the neighbor, Rom. 13:10; it does not seek harm, 1 Cor. 13:5; love lays down its life for the brethren, 1 John 3:16.

Thesis II.

“This commandment binds Christians not to enter into any contract with their neighbor other than a just contract, that is, one that does not favor one contracting party at the expense of the other.”

Thesis III.

“The usual contract of loan on interest is one by which the creditor leaves to himself not only the reimbursement of the capital but also a profit on the same, but leaves solely to the debtor any possible loss or risk. It goes without saying that the creditor and the debtor also share risk and loss in so far as all earthly goods are subject to risk and loss.”

Thesis IV.

“All earthly property, therefore also money, all successes of human work are uncertain since they fall into sin and are subject to various misfortunes. If these misfortunes are not the rule, they are exceptions to the rule and are not entirely uncommon.”

In this respect, it was noted that if the profit on the debtor's side from the borrowed capital were a certainty, a constant profit, the injustice of demanding interest would cease to exist. But this is simply not the case.

— The blessing

of God cannot be foreseen, predicted or forced by men with certainty. There are unfruitful years, losses through rain, drought, hail, fire, war, evil men, etc. — Such misfortunes are not always the result of carelessness, frivolity, ignorance or laziness, but they often happen to the individual without his fault under God's all-wise decree.

Thesis V.

“All these exceptional cases are not covered by the usual loan contract on interest, and the debtor is obliged to pay them in any case. This is what makes it unjust.”

For example, it has been cited: If a farmer who has borrowed money on interest has lost so much through crop failure that he is unable to pay the principal and interest, he is still obliged under the usual contract to pay both. The creditor's claim is unfair to such a person. So whoever wants to guard against such ruthlessness and injustice, simply write in the contract: If you do not gain anything with my money, then I do not want any profit either. That is all we are demanding.

It has been replied that while the commandment of love stands over the contract of loan, the creditor [*sic*: German has debtor] who is a Christian will not act with the debtor according to the strictness of the loan contract. He may not do so because love forbids him to do so. To this it was responded: it is wrong for the creditor to ask his debtor to rely on his love (inheritance occurs when the creditor dies, and who knows if he [*the heir*] will still have love at the time of the event mentioned). — The case is very simple: if it is against love to demand interest in the case mentioned if the customer has not had a profit, it is also against love to conclude a contract according to which the debtor must pay interest in this case as well. Because those exceptions

are not considered in the usual loan contract, therefore it is an unjust one. This is, then, about right and wrong, God's grace and wrath, salvation and damnation, heaven and hell; woe to me if I do something that I am not sure is right in all cases. The contract must therefore in no case make unjust demands on one's neighbor! for the apostle says: "He that doubteth is damned if he eat." Rom. 14:23. Interest should therefore be demanded only with conditions, because any profit that the future is supposed to bring is uncertain. — The divine law (which, according to the seventh commandment, also obliges us to help our neighbor to improve and protect his goods and food) is much more spiritual than people think; when God will once pass judgement on the Last Day, then He will declare many things to be sin, which all the world, including many Christians, consider to be right.

The acceptance and the preliminary proceedings of these Theses took place in a spirit of love and peace, and the expectations which many opponents of the Synod had of these proceedings were fortunately not fulfilled. Although the Missouri Synod had repeatedly declared that the doctrine of usury was not a test question for church fellowship, Iowa Professor G. Fritschel nevertheless appeared as judge of the above-mentioned doctrine and declared in a pamphlet that it was "quite obviously contrary to God's clear and explicit Word" and was based on a Levitical legalistic standpoint. To this Dr. Walther answered, in [Vol. 15 p. 360 of *Lehre und Wehre*](#), by referring to the above Theses, "in which it is irrefutably proven that it is precisely this point that proves that Luther's doctrine is not only based on clear passages from the Holy Scriptures, but also necessarily on the simple principles of love and righteousness. "Meanwhile," Dr. Walther continues, "may the gentlemen of Iowa, for our sake, win over the whole world submerged in usury and call it out under their banners; those who are are of the truth

will finally fall to this truth, and blow away the dust that Iowa has stirred up to obscure the bright rays in darkness.” —

[\[↑\]](#) [The 25th Anniversary \(Jubilee\) Synod.](#)

The following Fifteenth Convention of the General Synod, held in St. Louis in 1872, celebrated the 25th anniversary of the existence of the Missouri Synod. Dr. Walther's Synodical Jubilee sermon, which deals with the 25 years of our Synod's preservation with the Word of Truth as the good reason for our anniversary celebration today, and is based on Psalm 119:43, is printed in [From Our Master's Table, p. 259](#) ([Lutherische Brosamen, p. 553](#)) (also published as a pamphlet). The leading sentences, which the Synod took up as the main subject of the discussion, had as their theme: “What issue do we have to resolve, so that the blessing which God has poured out on us over the last 25 years will not be spoiled by us, but will be inherited by our descendants?” It was first emphasized in seven points what this blessing consists of. Above all, that at a time of almost general apostasy from the Lutheran faith and the greatest division in the Lutheran Church, there is unity among us in purely Lutheran doctrines, far from papal and unionist tendencies. The seventh point that was highlighted: the fraternal harmony and collaboration of four like-minded Lutheran synods. — “Not to us, Lord, not to us, but to Thy name give glory for Thy grace and truth!”

On the other hand there was talk about the dangers of spoiling this blessing, for even the prophecies of the Holy Scriptures teach us partly about the general dangers of all times and partly about the special dangers of recent times. 1 Tim. 4:1-2; 2 Tim. 3:1, 2; 2 Peter 3:3; Matt. 24:11-12; Luke 18:8; 1 Thess. 5:3. — — To this were added two more memorable statements by Luther in his Epistle Sermon on

[Invocavit Sunday](#), and in the Scriptures to the councillors of German lands. — Thirdly, it was emphasized what our task must be, so that this blessing will not be spoiled but bequeathed to our descendants! On this point, it was not only said in general terms that we must beware of ingratitude for which the well of grace is drying up, of complacent boasting which provokes God to anger, of satiety, stinginess and godless living, but also in particular, a) that pastors not only watch over their congregations but also over themselves and keep the mystery of faith in a clear conscience, prepare carefully for their sermons, practice pastoral care conscientiously and in the evangelical spirit, and b) that the churches and their members receive the Gospel not only in word, but both in power and in the Holy Spirit, establish and promote Christian schools, practice fraternal punishment and discipline in a truly evangelical spirit, not allow secret societies to arise among themselves, and be generous in supporting the institutions and the Synod. In this regard, we also remembered the educational institutions, which should cultivate not only a scholarly endeavour but also a Christian spirit among their pupils. Finally, the theological publications should also faithfully continue to present and defend the purely Lutheran doctrine, and not deny their Christian character even in polemics that become necessary. — The success of such work should be committed in earnest prayer to God, in order that when the Lord comes, today or tomorrow, that we may be found only as faithful servants. —

So that the pastors and congregations do not allow themselves to be made lazy and secure, it was emphasized at the discussion, for example, that it is much more difficult to preserve the treasure of pure doctrine and right faith and godly life than it is to pass over it. It is a deeply moving Word of the Lord: “For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.” [[Matt. 14:12](#)] Only then do we really preserve the treasure,

when we also advance. There must never be a standstill in the clergy. Standstill is relapse. — To the enthusiasts, however, we pastors must emphasize: Man with all his art is not able to do anything; but the Word of God is and remains a power of God, and if, as our old teachers used to say, the devil himself preached it, how can a preacher have a clear conscience if he himself is not in true repentance, otherwise Psalm 50:16-17 applies to him. Every sermon he gives to others must first be a sermon addressed to himself. He should not have to hear in his conscience the voice of God: "Be silent, you hypocrite! The so-called dead orthodoxy is something very terrible. Such people process something in their heads, but they are a sounding brass and a ringing bell. God does not want to know about such pastors. The pastors should not be mere light bearers, but lights; they should not be mere salt vessels, but salt themselves. He who preaches repentance to others is condemned tenfold, when he does not repent himself.

It was also noted that the Jubilee Synod was also right to speak of great dangers. One should not think that serious vigilance is superfluous, because God has given our Synod such wonderful gifts, for apostasy can come suddenly, and the hopes that some have that the Lutheran Church will attract many people from other Churches as well, and that in the end it will be the ruling Church in America, are unfounded. We have to fight not only against the papacy, but also against the union among all sects. And in the Lutheran Church itself there will still have to be a hard fight if the truth is to remain.

This word was like a prophecy, because seven years later the Missouri Synod was involved in a serious battle with several of its own previous members; before some suspected it, the controversy over the Election of Grace broke out in 1879.

[↑] The founding convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference in 1872.

Since the Missouri Synod wants to keep the unity in the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith as an precious gem, and accordingly fights all errors that are in dispute with the Lutheran Confessions, especially in Germany with regard to the Missouri Lutherans the opinion has arisen here and there as if they were to be compared to savages who are always only on the warpath. But it has not only been shown by the ever-increasing growth of the Synod that the congregations and the various districts have been built in peace within its borders; it has also always been complained, especially by the Missouri Synod, that the state of the Lutheran Church in this country is all the sadder because the various Lutheran Synods oppose each other, work against each other and thereby give rise to divisions and separations in congregations. Although there should actually only be one general Lutheran synod in North America, the members of the Missouri Synod well recognized that there can be no talk of a territorial delimitation in synods of the individual states, as long as the different synods, although they use the name "Lutheran", deviate in their doctrine and practice in many ways from the faith and confession of the pure Lutheran Church. [↑] In view of this sad state of affairs, the first attempt was made to reach agreement by free conferences in the right understanding of the Lutheran Confessions. In 1856 the first free conference was held in Columbus, Ohio, at which individual pastors from various synods in the country appeared, especially those who were members of the Ohio and Missouri synods, from which the latter had taken as its starting point the suggestion to such a meeting and mutual understanding based on the doctrine of our Augsburg Confession. In the following period

two more free conferences were held, in Cleveland and in Pittsburgh. Of even greater importance, however, was a meeting of representatives of the synods of Ohio, Missouri, Wisconsin, Illinois and Minnesota, as well as the Norwegian Lutheran Synod, which took place in Chicago in January 11-13, 1871, in the congregation of pastor Pastor P. Beyers. The main result of the consultation, which was conducted in brotherly love, was the draft of a “Form of Union of the Synods represented at the Convention”, which draft was to be presented to the various Synods during the course of the year. After this was done, the majority of the members of the previous convention gathered in the St. Paul’s Church of Dr. Sihler at Fort Wayne from Nov. 14-16, 1871, and concluded the deliberations on the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference in the hope that it would be a great blessing for the American Lutheran Church. Professor [Walther](#) was again appointed chairman of this meeting, and Pastor [Herzberger](#) (then a member of the Ohio Synod) was appointed secretary. The members of the Illinois and Minnesota Synods who had recently left the General Council were also recommended to the other synods for participation in the formation of the Synodical Conference.

After the “Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference” had thus been constituted into an ecclesiastical body, the first regular meeting of the same, consisting of the delegates of all the above-mentioned synods, took place July 10-16, 1872 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where Theses on the doctrine [of justification](#) were discussed, as well as the question: “[What is our duty towards the English people of our country?](#)”

In the address with which Professor Walther opened the sessions as president of the general Missouri Synod in 1869, he began with the following: Having barely recovered from an illness,

he wanted to send a word from the teacher of us all, Luther, instead of his own address. — “A disciple of Luther and, as I hope to God, a faithful disciple of him, I have stammered everything I have ever publicly spoken and written only after this prophet of the last age of the world.” He would, however, under the present circumstances, make Luther's words all the more dear as his own, “since we are now once again, albeit only in a small way, in the same ecclesiastical situation in which Luther once found himself.”

“In 1539, when the flowering of the Reformation work seemed to be wilting again, Luther wrote the following, among other things:

‘Such was at all times the course of events: when God’s word flourished somewhere and his little flock was gathered, the devil became aware of the light, and he breathed and blew and stormed against it with strong, mighty winds from every nook and corner in an attempt to extinguish this divine light. And even if one or two winds were brought under control and were successfully resisted, he constantly stormed and blew forth from a different hole against the light. There was no letup or end to it, nor will there be until the Last Day. I believe that I alone—not to mention the ancients—have suffered more than twenty blasts and rabbles which the devil has blown up against me. First there was the papacy; And then when I had practically stopped fearing such blasts of the devil, he began to blow at me from a different hole by Münzer and the revolt, he broke a few panes in the window by means of Karlstadt,... Then came the Anabaptists — — —. Therefore I am also praying for a gracious hour of death; I care no more for this life. I exhort you, our posterity, to pray and to pursue the Word of God with diligence. Keep God’s poor candle burning. Be warned and be on the alert, watching lest at any hour the devil try to break a pane or window or fling open a door or tear the roof off in order to extinguish the light; for he will not die before the Last Day.... It is said: ‘Be watchful,’ for the devil is called a ‘roaring lion’ — he does so to the end of time. Let us be guided by this!

‘God help us — — For after all, we are not the ones who can preserve the church, nor were our forefathers able to do so. Nor will our successors have this power. No, it was, is, and will be He who says, ‘I am with you always, to the close of the age.’ As it says in Hebrews 13:8, ‘Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever,’ and in Revelation 1:8, ‘He who is and who was and who is to come.’ This is His name and no one else’s; nor may anyone else be called by that name; ... He does this so plainly that we could touch and feel it, if we did not want to believe it. We must leave this to Him!’ — — After quoting the passage from Luther (“Against the Antinomians” [[AE 47](#), p. 115 f.]), Professor Walther continued: “May God give us all the grace to heed this reproach of our common teacher also in the present days and in the future; may we recognize that the ever hotter and more dangerous struggle for the jewel of the pure Word of God in which we find ourselves is a struggle which the true Church of Christ has always had to fight, and of which she will not be exalted until she has passed from faith to sight, until she will triumph with Christ. But on the other hand, may we also hear Luther's warning against delusion, as if we must and could preserve the Church through our wisdom, and recognize that we have nothing to do but to remain faithful and obedient to His Word, not as masters but as servants of it, and then leave the preservation of the Church to the One who alone founded it. May others, in good faith, now and then let some of God's truth fade away to make peace and help the church, but may our guiding star be and remain rather the Word of our God: “Obedience is better than sacrifice” [[1 Samuel 15:22](#)]. Amen.

Already at the [second meeting of the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference](#) [[Walther not present](#)], the discussion of a draft [on church fellowship](#) began, which consisted of ten theses. As a preliminary remark, it was pointed out that this term is not understood here in the broader sense,

in so far as it is used to indicate the difference between heathen, Jews and Mohammedans, but rather the church fellowship in the narrower sense, in so far as it refers to the fellowship of the Evangelical Lutheran congregations in relation to the more or less corrupted, false-believing church congregations. Thesis I emphasizes that the only internal bond of fellowship between the individual Lutheran congregations — — is the true, righteous and saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, which with and in Him also grasps and holds fast His most holy and perfect merit. In Thesis II, the only external bond of fellowship between the individual Lutheran congregations in various peoples and languages is the Unaltered Augsburg Confession. A footnote states that, provided it is not denied that the other Lutheran confessional writings are in a legitimate connection with the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, it is not absolutely necessary to accept them. Theses III-V state that the conscience of all Lutherans, whether individual congregations or ecclesiastical bodies, is bound to the Unaltered Augsburg Confession in all articles of faith according to doctrine and its defence [*Lehre und Wehre*]; a church body which does not accept the doctrinal and defending words of this Confession as they read is therefore not a true Lutheran congregation or Lutheran body; even one who denies the binding nature of the conclusions which logically follow from the words of this confession is not a true member of the Lutheran Church, even if he unjustly retains the Lutheran name.

At the [Fourth Convention of the Synodical Conference](#), which opened in Cleveland, Ohio, on July 14, 1874 [*sic, not 1875*], the discussion began about the fact that where the orthodox confession was valid, church practice must necessarily be in accordance with the confession. [↑] This is stated in the [Thesis VI](#), “for every action of the church must either be a direct expression and actual realization of the confession, or

(if it belongs to the area of Christian freedom) it must not contradict the confession.” It has been noted here, among other things, that there is nothing easier than subscribing to the symbolic books, especially for one who has no conscience, and at a time when this is part of the good reputation of a Lutheran preacher. — This is not what [Article VII](#) of the Augsburg Confession has in mind when it states as a mark of the Church that “the Gospel is rightly taught”. — God is not satisfied with such a life, since one may speak piously from the mouth, but by his life the same lies are being told. James therefore demands: “Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works” (James 2:18), and David says that he who hates discipline should also not put the Word of God into his mouth. From this it is clear that the true Lutheran Church does not just accept pure doctrine with the mouth, but also testifies to it by deeds. Although the main point of a preacher's teaching is that the doctrine is pure, Paul demands of Titus that the work be in accordance with the professed knowledge of God (Tit. 1:16). Therefore, in the church, not only the pure preaching that is going on in the church, but also the whole action should correspond to it, otherwise the church will be a great hypocrite. This is followed by a serious witness from Luther: — “Many have the word, but those who do not believe in it or do not do it” (“On the Councils and the Church” [[AE 41, 3-178](#)]). — Although it is possible that the members of the General Council do not see the necessary connection between confession and practice, so that we do not yet consider them hypocrites, it must nevertheless be called a denial, that there the confession is on paper, but by practice it is rendered null and void. The Synodal Conference recognized it well that it with all those who were with it of one faith and confession should activate this unity by church union, in the other case one would at least give the appearance of separatism; in the other case one would at least give the appearance of separatism; but if in another church body there is a practice that contradicts the church

confession, — “then it is obvious that such a mouth confession does not come from the heart and that such a body is not serious about its confession. For the one who does not act according to his confession reveals that he either out of church politics or also out of ignorance of the consequences and implications flowing from his confession fails to practice according to his confession. We cannot recognize any such body which calls itself Lutheran as truly Lutheran, but must continually and seriously punish such real hypocrisy and denial of confession.” — As for the General Council in particular, it not only tolerates, but in many cases even protects, false doctrine and practice, pulpit-swapping with false believers, communion with misbelievers, and the godless lodge system, and it destroys faithful congregations. In the New York Ministerium, even in the Michigan Synod, false practices are tolerated, no doctrinal discipline is practiced, no testimony is given against secret societies, and even if some witnesses rise up throughout the entire area of the General Council, they cannot penetrate. Thus, even though this body confesses our symbols on paper, all the representatives of the Synodical Conference declared: We consider the General Council to be not faithful to the Confessions, not truly Lutheran. The confession serves as its figurehead. Its practice gives the confession the lie. Anyone can convince themselves, even those who do not understand the theory, that such oral confession is nothing but fraud. With such false Lutherans we must not maintain church fellowship. and theory, as happened The position of the General Council is more dangerous than the open rejection of confession in the General Synod, because the General Council still deceives some people with its confessions A continuous witness against the Council is necessary, — to also punish the bearers of false doctrines, by naming them, to refute them and to

warn against them! *) [[↑](#)] The following [Thesis VIII](#) sets out the multiple ways in which this contradiction between confession and practice can take place. It also emphasizes by name that a body that does not resolutely oppose every form of chiliasm is not yet truly Lutheran, since chiliasm is the favorite doctrine of our time and is also found among the leaders of the General Council. — As a contradiction between confession and practice, [Thesis X](#) also rejected the idea that a Lutheran synod tolerates that some of its pastors, who also call themselves Lutheran, serve congregations that are actually “united” [[i.e. Reformed and Lutheran](#)]. The last two theses (X and XI) were adopted at [the fifth convention of the Synodical Conference in St. Paul, Minnesota](#). While the representatives of all the Synodical Conference synods agreed on the above theses, it was well known that serious evils still prevailed, especially in the Ohio Synod. Attention was also called to the fact that, e.g. there is not no announcement for Holy Communion in many Ohio congregations. Also, it was an offence to many that as late as 1877, an old Ohio Synod pastor who was known as a member or intimate friend of the Oddfellow Lodge was elected to the presidium of a district. Dr. Walther testified against such still existing abuses at a Missouri District Synod in the same year, and declared that before the plan to divide the present Synodical Conference into State-District Synods in its entirety could be realized, one would first have to be convinced that the members of the

*) Twelve representatives of the Ohio Synod agreed on the above witness against church fellowship with the General Council, — and currently the leaders of the Ohio Synod are seeking a connection with this Council, which has been denying loyalty to the Confessions. The Ohio people did not wish to change the actual state of confession, but only the Constitution, before they would join the General Council. This too was immediately rejected in a noble manner by the leaders of the General Council, yet they hope to see the Ohio Synod joining the General Council in the near future.

Ohio Synod in particular would be united and faithful to the Confessions also in their practice. This rebuke, which was heard by several Ohio Synod pastors who were present as guests, was received indignantly. But while the Missourians were careful not to in any way infringe upon the Ohio Synod's independence, many were surprised to see that the leaders of the Ohio Synod joined the opposition of Professor Schmidt, who was of the Norwegian Synod, and took part in the erupting doctrinal dispute with such zeal that in 1881 the Ohio Synod, in its great majority, finally separated from the fellowship of the Evangelical-Lutheran Synodal Conference.

[↑] This will be the place to look back at the Ohio Synod as it has been since the mid-1850s.

In 1854, at the session of the General Ohio Synod, the question of how to relate to pastors who were members of secret, sworn societies (a matter touched on above) was put up for consideration. While a number of younger pastors, who were publicly accused of being attached to Dr. Sihler's coattails, urged that these Lodge members should leave either the secret society or the Synod, an old preacher, Andreas Henkel, stood up and declared: "I have been a member of such a society for 33 years and have gone through all the stages in it" (as a [Freemason](#)), and that he was thus unwilling to leave his Lodge. Since Pastor Lehmann, who was highly respected in his Synod, was also used to accompany on horseback the corpse of the [Oddfellows](#), when a deceased member of the Columbus congregation had to be escorted, it was considered a step forward when, through the mediation of Pastors Loy and Lehman, the decision was made that henceforth, no such pastors who were members of a secret society would be admitted to the Synod, although the Synod expressly refused the meaning as if it were demanding the resignation of those lodge members who were already pastors in the Ohio Synod.

After that, the same church politics was practiced as in the case of serving mixed congregations; for it was much better to ask what would be called expedient (useful for the moment and acceptable to reason, as Zwingli said) than what would be according to the Word of God. Pastor Loy, who soon afterwards also became a professor in Columbus, was considered a staunch opponent of the secret societies. Since he also raised his voice against this cancerous evil in the *Lutheran Standard*, the English District separated from the Ohio Synod and joined the General Synod. Twice such a separation took place, and it was hoped that the Ohio Synod only gained by the departure of these English pastors, who were almost all members of the Lodge. In 1866, when the old General Synod split into a lax Methodistic party and a stricter party which as a whole and in general adopted the Lutheran symbols, when in particular the Philadelphia Drs. [Ch. P. Krauth](#), [A. Spaeth](#), [J. Mann](#), W. A. Schäffer [2] and others fought against the [Platformists](#) who, in place of the old Augsburg Confession, issued a newly manufactured [Platform](#) as their confession (only that which corresponded to American advanced Lutheranism was retained, but the remaining articles, especially those dealing with the holy sacraments, confession and absolution, were deleted as a papistical appendage), the Ohio brothers were also invited to participate in the so-called General Council. At that time, the General Council again called itself the Evangelical Lutheran Church Union of North America, although it was known that the Missouri Synod, which already had 400 pastors, also had its home in America. The Missouri Synod declared that it would not be present at this Council until a complete unity of faith and doctrine based on the divine Word had been achieved at free conferences, to which they cheerfully offered to come. The General Council contained many German elements, not only the Synods of New York, Michigan and Pennsylvania, but also the Western Synods of Wisconsin,

Illinois and Minnesota had initially joined. Although the Ohio Synod would not have lost any of its external creed by its admission, the Ohio delegation returned home in November 1867 from the visit of the General Council gathered at the English Lutheran Church at Fort Wayne without having achieved anything; they were not satisfied with the Constitution adopted there and were afraid to renew the fraternal relations without further negotiation with the English District, which had only recently been separated from the Ohio Synod and was now attached to the General Council. An old respected Ohio pastor at that time called out to his Synod: "The Missouri Synod on the one hand and the General Council on the other hand are becoming large bodies, we Ohioans will be crushed between these two millstones in a short time!" The Missouri Synod was never intent on expanding at the expense of the Ohio Synod. Many Ohio pastors, no doubt the better ones, when they reported for admission to the Missouri Synod district presidents, were instructed by the latter to continue in the Ohio Synod and by their testimony, after the manner of a leavening agent, penetrate their Synod. Nevertheless, the Ohio Synod lost its prestige, its congregations showed little love for its synod, and they noted that the Missourian pastors where they were located were soon taking care of the youth and establishing parish schools, which the Ohio pastors did not do. It was not uncommon for a congregation that had previously been served by Ohio pastors, when a vacancy arose, to consult a neighboring pastor from the Missouri Synod and finally appoint a Missourian as pastor. If such a congregation was therefore accused of apostasy by the Ohio president, it usually claimed that as a congregation it had never before been publicly committed to the Ohio Synod by public decree. In order to control this grievance, the Ohio Synod convention decided one day that all congregations served by Ohio pastors would be considered as belonging to the Synod. If such a congregation did not find itself willing to join, it would be

the duty of the president concerned to take away the pastor from this congregation and transfer him elsewhere. This hierarchical decision was carried out, for example, in the Pittsburgh area by the Eastern District. The consequence of such arbitrariness was that the congregation in question turned to the Missouri pastors, and these were obligated, since the bond which binds the pastor to his congregation is a divine one, and for the sake of mere synodical relations should not be torn to take care of such abandoned congregations. It has already been noted above, and by the Columbus conference resolution, which seeks to invalidate validly performed official acts by the stroke of a pen, while they were not performed under the jurisdiction of the Ohio Synod general president, it is evident that the Ohio Synod also understood administrative antics; the Synod believed itself entitled to not only to withdraw the license, but also to depose a pastor from his congregation, although the Missouri pastors were scolded as hierarchs, who, on the contrary, worked by preaching the Word that the congregation needed, and were often loved by them. Although the State of Ohio was claimed by name to be for Ohio Synod pastors, they did not succeed in gaining a foothold in the two largest cities of that state, Cincinnati and Cleveland. When for a short time in Cincinnati a split in the Missouri congregation arose, and several Ohio pastors tried to establish themselves there, the attempt failed nevertheless. In Cleveland, however, which has many more sound German elements among its inhabitants, one Missouri congregation develops around another, and the congregational schools there are seen as outposts for the establishment of new congregations. The Ohio pastors, however, were not anxious to bring their congregations to a sound church understanding and formation from within, Christian church life was missing under their leadership, but most unfortunate were those who, in the face of the prevailing ecclesiastical devastation, turned their eyes to Pastor Grabau in Buffalo, while the latter was still

able to manage a vigorous control. In 1856, five Ohio pastors had joined a Buffalo convention as guests and prospective members. Nevertheless, Pastor Grabau kept warm friends among the Ohio people who were unhappy that the leaders of the Ohio Synod were taking steps to approach the Missouri Synod in the late 1860s and to form the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference in conjunction with the Missouri Synod and some Western Synods that had withdrawn from the General Council. After the Wisconsin Synod was ready to agree with the Missouri Synod, negotiations with the Ohio Synod repeatedly encountered difficulties. Pastor Peter Eirich, who had previously been in the Ohio Synod area but had been ousted by Ohio pastors who were attached to the lodges, publicly declared, "I know the Ohio people, outwardly they are strictly Lutheran, but inwardly their whole way is lax!" Since the Ohio Synod, too, had to concern itself more with doctrines, including the doctrine of the Church and the holy Ministry, three Theses were adopted by them, of which the Missouri Synod, gathered at Fort Wayne in 1869, judged that "while they may be considered a beginning to a testimony, they do not yet provide a firm foundation!" Since at that time a number of such pastors who had left Grabau, but still held to its false doctrine, had been accepted by the Ohio Synod, the Missouri Synod postponed the fraternal recognition of the Ohio Synod. The Ohio pastors hoped that by such fraternization with the Missouri Synod, as requested, they would be able to achieve more peace within their congregations and to defend against the conversion of their congregations to the Missouri Synod. At that time it was said that the Buffalo Synod was torn into three pieces, the Western Synods were leaving the Church Council, "the Missourians own the kingdom!" Accordingly,

the Ohio people also had to follow. [↑] In the spring of 1872 the Missouri Synod celebrated its 25th anniversary in St. Louis, where two Ohio professors, Prof. Loy and E. Schmidt, were also guests. The Eastern District of the Ohio Synod pursued the union with zeal. When the first meeting of the “[Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference](#)” was opened in Pastor J. [Bading's](#) church in Milwaukee on July 10, 1872, twelve representatives of the Ohio Synod had gathered there (Professors Lehmann, Loy and five pastors, among others). A preparatory meeting had already been held in Fort Wayne, and all the synods, those of Ohio, Missouri, Wisconsin, Norwegian, Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, all came together in a federation that was a lasting blessing for the entire Evangelical Lutheran Church. Not only did they want to control by a firm agreement the troublesome erection of opposition altars, but also the public opposition in the church publications was to stop, because everything that the members of the Synodical Conference had to agree upon with each other was to be discussed and decided upon at conferences, District Synods and finally, as a last resort, at the meetings of this Synodical Conference. In particular, the intention was also to bring together the educational institutions situated in the area of these six synods in such a way that the academy which was appropriate to each synod would then send the students of theology to St. Louis, the theological seminary for the study of the last few years, at least for the time being until the time comes when the Synodical Conference would establish a common great seminary. For this final purpose, each of the major synods was to appoint its own professor in St. Louis; the Norwegian synod had already established a professorship in St. Louis; the Wisconsin synod had already elected a professor there, while the Ohio synod did not take such a step. Students from the two synods mentioned above also came to St. Louis, but not from the Ohio Synod; one

had to assume that the pupils leaving the Columbus college did not have a sufficient secondary school education to enter the St. Louis class. At the 1878 Missouri Synod convention in St. Louis, Prof. M. Loy was elected English professor for the theological seminary in St. Louis, but Prof. Loy did not accept this appointment. It was hoped that the growing generation of pastors would merge more closely from school on, and that the unity which had been lacking in these synods would be better guaranteed and promoted in the future. It was regretted, however, that the members of the Ohio Synod behaved as reserved gentlemen within the Synodical Conference. As late as 1869, when union with Ohio was not rejected but only postponed, Dr. Sihler shook his head deliberately and declared that, although he could not see the reasons for an alliance with Ohio, he believed that the fault lay with him as he grew old (he was born in 1801). But his knowledge of human nature had not deceived him. —

[↑] IAt the sessions of the Synodical Conference, the synodical reports which the individual synods publish are usually reviewed by specially selected committee members, and when the Missouri Synod had handed over the [Western District synodical report](#) [[German text](#),], which contained the doctrine of the election by grace discussed in Altenburg in 1877, to a committee consisting of Ohioans, the contents of this Altenburg Synodical Report were approved and the same was recommended to the pastors; yes, even the sermon that Pastor J. G. Schaller gave in Altenburg [or St. Louis?], which explained the same subject so clearly that Prof. Walther said: “Schaller has already anticipated everything we wanted to say,” translated into English and printed in the "Lutheran Standard", the English organ of the Ohio Synod. The leaders of the Ohio Synod had also been well aware for years that Dr. Walther and most of the theologians of the Missouri Synod had been using the terminology, in regard to the Election of Grace, that the children of God, in consideration or

in view of their faith were chosen for salvation, is an unfortunate choice of terminology, for Dr. Walther, for example, had already explained this expression [in 1872 in the July issue of *Lehre und Wehre*](#), whereas according to Scripture and the Formula of Concord the divine Election of Grace, which is only an election for salvation, has no other causes than God's mercy and Christ's merit. The Iowa Professor G. Fritschel was the only one at that time who wanted to smell a Calvinist determinism in Dr. Walther's doctrine; Prof. M. Loy, however, even in the year 1877 before the outbreak of the Election of Grace [[or Predestination](#)] controversy, in connection with the [Herford Catechism](#) explanation, which he had to review, as an criticism *) that he had to make on this book, had added to his expert opinion the words: "The expression used in that book 'in view of faith' 'could easily lead to errors.'"

[↑] When the Election Controversy came to public attention, while Professor [F. A. Schmidt](#), currently professor of the Norwegian Synod and serving in Madison, suddenly published a spiteful opposition paper called *Old and New* [[Altes und Neues](#)] in which he declared that he had to sound the alarm bell, it was the duty of the President of the Synodical Conference, even if the Missouri Synod was to be torn into a thousand pieces, either to stop this unconstitutional activity of Prof. F. A. Schmidt, or to organize an extra session of the Synodical Conference, so that the dispute in question could be settled in the right way, which the brethren had already provided for such cases in the constitution. At that time, however, Ohio professor W. F. Lehmann was the president of the Synodical Conference, and as such he did nothing in this matter until death overtook him. **)

*) [Loy's](#) report on question 420 of that catechism is printed in the [Der Lutheraner 1881 p. 116](#). In the "[Berichtigung](#)" [[correction](#)] Dr. Walther writes p. 39 [?] with reference to it: "This and no other is also our judgement. Now [Stellhorn](#) may either claim that his comrade-in-arms in 1877 was still a 'New-Missourian' heretic, or he may stop counting us among the Calvinists."

**) Dr. Walther travelled on behalf of the St. Louis faculty to

On the other hand, Prof. Loy, as President of the Ohio Synod, was all the more zealous. Since Prof. F. A. Schmidt, from the beginning of the dispute he had started, had brought on to his side some brothers-in-law who were pastors in the Missouri Synod and won over co-workers for his opposition publication, the dissatisfied pastors, who were joined by Prof. Stellinghorne, who had previously expressed himself as a restless spirit in other respects, now saw their time had come. Although at all times in the Missouri Synod the doctrine of justification was regarded as the very sun of all doctrines and the Election of Grace was only brought to light as a consoling confirmation of the state of grace of justified believers, the above-mentioned Altenburg Synodal Report of 1877 was nevertheless presented in individual mutilated passages in such a heretical manner that in such Missouri congregations, in which these hostile pastors stood, excitement and finally division arose. [↑] Prof. Stellinghorne, who until then had taught languages at the Fort Wayne “Gymnasium” as a philological professor, was now called to Columbus at Prof. Loy's side as theological professor, and on September 8, 1881 Prof. Loy, as president, opened an extra session of the general Ohio Synod in Wheeling, W. Va. In his opening address, President Loy had cause to speak out why he was in such a hurry in this matter, since a doctrinal dispute requires much study and consideration. The general synod had met only one year earlier; it was more convenient for the Ohio people to watch or wait in doctrinal disputes. Meanwhile, the leaders of the Ohio Synod, with the exception of the former District President Pastor Fr. Brand [*sic?* Probably [Peter Brand](#)], who is already mentioned as an opponent in the synodical report, had well understood why it was expedient to confront the Missouri Synod as a united party. Shortly before that, in the same year, it had adopted [Thirteen Theses](#) extracted by Dr. Walther from the

to Columbus to Lehmann's funeral to offer his condolences. One can also see from the repeated election of Lehmann as President of the Synodal Conference how gladly the Missourians like to resign in times of peace.

[Article 11 of the Formula of Concord](#), which deal with the general counsel of grace and the Election of Grace, with a majority bordering on unanimity *); a year earlier [[1880](#)], a large general pastoral conference had also been held in Chicago, which controlled the confusion of minds. Nonetheless, the Ohio president already claimed in his opening address that the Missouri Synod had deviated from the old Lutheran doctrine!

So the first thing to do was to make the Ohio Synod a place of orthodoxy. The formula that election takes place in view of (or in consideration of) faith was, as it was said, written as a shibboleth from the banner of the Ohio Synod, in the spirit of the old teachers and the great theologians who use the term. Now it was not decided to postpone further discussion and voting until the following annual meeting, but on the fourth day of the discussion a vote was taken on the question whether this doctrine, which by and large agrees with the teaching of the old dogmatists, should be the only legitimate one in the institutions, schools, publications and churches of the Ohio Synod. The vote showed that 109 pastors and 33 delegates affirmed the above question, 19 pastors and 3 delegates voted against. Pastor Brand then read out a clear protest on behalf of the majority of those who voted against, stating first that the Ohio Synod had hereby adopted a new declaration on the election of grace by a majority of its members, and secondly that they (the protesters) have no doubt that while our doctrinal fathers [*Lehrväter*] have retained the right doctrinal basis, it is evident that some of these fathers have used different and contradictory ways of speaking on this very point, including some that are neither Scriptural nor in accordance with the symbols. But what is most striking

*) The [Thirteen Theses](#) in question will be quoted verbatim in the next to the last section, Chapter XII, of this document, which deals with the Election Controversy.

is that the Synod herewith in its entirety confesses to doctrinal writings (of the old dogmatists), which it has not at all examined by the Scriptures and the Confessions of the church (which it does not even know). This is a non-Lutheran procedure, because the Lutheran faith and confession expressly demands that one goes back to the basis of divine truth. “In whatever books they may be found, and whoever may have written them, or even now may be disposed to defend them, might be exposed [distinctly repudiated], so that every one may be faithfully warned against the errors, which are spread here and there in the writings of some theologians, and no one be misled in this matter by the reputation [authority] of any man.” [[FC Rule and Norm 19-20](#)] The Comprehensive Summary of the Formula of Concord teaches this in explicit words. Thirdly, this protest declares that the doctrine adopted by the majority of the Synod, though not in itself heretical, is considered to be in error (as Prof. Loy himself had declared several years earlier): Protesters must reject an unqualified commitment to this expression, which is not found even in the Lutheran symbols to which one is committed in matters and words (*in rebus et phrasibus*). Therefore, so they say, this decision of the Ohio Synod, which overlooks the opposing doctrinal claims that the protesters represent, is unjustified, unLutheran and troublesome to conscience.

This same Synod, which in earlier years had been so unionist as to call a zealotism the desire of the strict Lutherans to put an end to the mixed congregations and participation in the secret societies, had suddenly come forward so vigorously that it declared the above position and version of the doctrine of the election of grace to be the only legitimate one, and already thereby compelled the protesting party to go out and form its own Synod. This then came to be known under the name: Evangelical-Lutheran [Concordia Synod](#) and has Pastor [P. Brand](#) as its president. — Meanwhile, the Ohio Synod was still part of the general Synodical Conference, as was also the Missouri Synod. In the constitution of the

Synodal Conference it was expressly stated that it was part of the purpose of the Synodical Conference, if a dispute arose among its members, to settle it on the basis of the divine Word. Although no force of majority vote can apply here, anyone who believes he is in the right, should nevertheless gladly bear witness before such a body. One might have expected that the members of the Ohio Synod would already feel compelled by brotherly love to go after the brethren who belonged to the Missouri Synod, and whom they considered to be erring, in this way, and to convert the supposedly erring ones from the error of their ways by presenting the proper foundation. Meanwhile, the vast majority of the Ohio Synod had quite different ideas. Although there were no lack of votes from that convention which declared that, since the Ohio Synod had already elected delegates to the Synodical Conference, they should go; there were also other synods represented there, to which one also had obligations; even if it was claimed that it was useless, one was nevertheless obliged to go, since the Ohio Synod had now taken a stand in this doctrinal dispute; if the Ohio delegates could defend their doctrine, they should go and defend it, that the suspicion should be removed from their hearts, as if Missouri wanted to teach Calvinism, and only against this suspicion the Missouri Synod had defended itself by its instruction given to the delegates! “What better place to make an unequivocal confession than there? Through oral exchange one has always gotten further than with a pen. If they (the Missouri Synod) want nothing to do with us, as both sides have said, then let us separate!” It was further argued that by the immediate withdrawal and omission of the delegation, Missouri would be granted the triumph “that we (Ohioans) had brought about the break-up.” — In the face of these valid reasons, what was intended by this extra convention and by the immediate withdrawal from the Synodical Conference finally became apparent. “It was replied,”

as p. 54 of the Synodical Report states in black and white, “that by hesitation we gain nothing, but harm ourselves. What should we do with the congregations that have separated from Missouri?” If one remains longer in the association of the Synodal Conference, one must (contractually) refuse to admit these congregations! “The same would perhaps have to exist for years alone and separately between the two synods.” (the latter would not in itself be a misfortune, since very often a congregation deliberates and examines for years before joining a synod). Another suggestion was made that we should not let the earlier times return, in which strife and discord had been sown by the erection of opposition altars; but the leaders were adamant and again claimed that those congregations “which have already broken away from Missouri and will still break away, should not be left hanging in uncertainty and trembling!” (p. 56.) So finally, the ruling majority also made this motion a resolution that the Ohio Synod to its great sorrow must withdraw from the Synodical Conference! — Since this decision paved the way for the Ohio Synod to align opposition altars and divisions in the Missouri Synod area, it is doubtful whether the Ohio Synod was really sorry to see this withdrawal! The Ohio Synod also succeeded in forming a so-called Northwestern District out of those who had left Missouri, but this district shows little attachment to the general Ohio Synod, since it was represented at the next to last convention by only one pastor. (In fact, another general assembly of the Ohio Synod took place at the end of 1884, at which the renegade ex-Missourians sought their own seminary for their Northwestern district). If this were not so apparent from the vocal Ohio leaders' own words above, the writer of these lines would much rather believe that the Ohio people had really separated from Missouri and the whole Synodical Conference out of a kind of need of conscience! But now it is obvious that they organized this quick separation from church politics

in order to gain territory and congregations that had been Missourian so far. Previously it was feared that they would lose more and more in relation to Missouri; it was also recently stated in an overview in the Ohio church newspaper that it had previously seemed as if the Ohio Synod was being eaten up and dried up; but now, as this tribulation came over the Missouri Synod and over three other synods, they used the opportunity to recruit and expand. That is why they made the doctrinal difference as important as they could, that is why they now boast that a new life is moving in the veins of the Ohio Synod, that is why the Ohio leaders already met with the vocal leaders of the Iowa Synod in Richmond, Indian, and the Iowans boasted that they were essentially in agreement with Ohio! The most essential thing now has become the enmity against Missouri; there is now a great harmony in this article, and the newly awakened party spirit ignites many to action who previously behaved indifferently. Particularly eagerly now those Ohio members are showing themselves who still pay homage to hierarchical tendencies from earlier times; at the last general synod an old Ohio pastor also raised Pastor Grabau's name again and reminded of his fights against Missouri. One could only object that the many items of business still to be done for the sake of one's own synod leaves no time for such discussions. The enmity against Missouri is so bitter that one must be careful not to call the Missouri congregations Evangelical-Lutheran, they must be branded as Calvinizing. — From a human point of view, the Missouri Synod has suffered not only harm but also ridicule as a result of these experiences. It was said in the publications of the General Council: “How soon the marriage between the Missouri and Ohio Synods was dissolved!” When Luther once allowed himself to conclude the [Wittenberg Concord](#) with Bucer and Capito in 1536, the well-meaning also hoped that the Lord's Supper controversy would now be settled at least within the German Empire. Luther was also

well-disposed, but he said, after the peace had already been concluded: it would have been best if the other part had just declared: We confess that God had let us down, we were in error, but Bucer and Capito did not want to confess this and the concluded peace was short-lived! Likewise, the members of the Ohio Synod around 1870 were willing to do whatever was necessary to participate in the fraternal union of the Synodical Conference, but they did not confess that they had been punished by Missouri (e.g., by Dr. Sihler). Sihler and Walther did not demand such a confession at that time, for love carries everything. Dr. Walther is said to have been deceived many times in his love. But in this he also proves himself to be one spirit with Luther, who says: Love must be deceived, for it is above evil and good, indeed above the whole world! Thus the Missourians must now suffer the same fate in their relationship with the Ohio people as Dr. Walther once said in another case: “Now it is said, of course, that you have let yourself be deceived again; — yes, love is deceived, and yet love is in the right! “Love is and must be deceived,” writes Luther, “because it believes and does everything; but faith cannot be lacking, because God does not lie, as man does.”

[↑] On the latest position of the Ohio Synod in the doctrine of the Election of Grace,

there is found at the end of the Ohio Synodical Report of 1881 concluding with p. 39, in a “concise declaration” from which, as is already evident from the contents of the first page of this important appendix, it is so far certain that the Ohio Synod does not now formally profess both the doctrine of Election of Grace contained in the Formula of Concord, as it reads, but rather the doctrine which is by and large found in the private writings of the later dogmatists of our church. Indeed, according to the above-mentioned report, the Ohio Synod itself defined its position in the above-mentioned doctrine as follows:

“We hereby reaffirm (?) the doctrine of the Election by Grace, as contained in the Formula of Concord, and also as it was by and large ever and always taught in accordance with it by the doctrinal fathers [*Lehrvätern*] of our church; in particular, we consider as Scriptural and symbolic, and therefore as good Lutheran, the doctrine of our fathers that the predestination of the elect to eternal life was made in view of faith, i.e., in view of the merit of Christ laid hold of through faith. Therefore be it resolved: That as in the past (?) so also in future the doctrine here confessed anew is to be the only legitimate one in our institutions, schools, publications and churches.”

Contrary to this, it must first be objected that this doctrine, according to which the Election of Grace took place in view of faith, was by no means the only legitimate one in the past of the Ohio Synod. It has already been noted above [[p. 338](#)] that just Professor Loy, the most respected teacher of the Ohio Synod, in 1877, in the official evaluation of the [Herford Catechism](#), described the expression “in view of faith” contained in this textbook rather as one that “could easily lead to errors”. The teachers of the Ohio Synod were also well aware of the fact that e.g. in 1872, i.e. after the formation of the Synodical Conference, this doctrinal expression in *Lehre und Wehre*, which had its origin with the dogmatists, was described as an unfortunate choice of terminology, and among other things, the following was testified to the Iowa Synod, [p. 132](#): “It is true that our Synod cannot and does not want to adopt the doctrinal expression [*Lehrtronus*] of our dogmatists of the 17th and 18th centuries, not because it thought that our faithful teachers were trying to express a false Pelagian doctrine, but because this expression, however orthodox it may have been understood by them, contains something false as soon as it is strictly taken, namely the doctrine that the elect are chosen for the sake of faith, that man's faith is the basis, the condition of his election and salvation.” —

But mainly one must ask, and ask in vain: where did the Ohio Synod, in the execution of the above-mentioned “Declaration”, even make the attempt to prove the above sentence of the Election of Grace made in view of faith as “in accordance with Scripture and Confessions”? Instead of taking reason and proof from the Holy Scriptures, that Declaration is rather based on the assertion that it would be too pitiful if the teaching fathers were considered, such as [König](#), [Quenstedt](#), [Hollaz](#) and others, did not teach about the Election of Grace in the sense of the Formula of Concord, but that the Ohio Synod was rather convinced that the doctrine of the dogmatists' Election of Grace was in accordance with the Formula of Concord, and that the doctrine of the Election of Grace of the Formula of Concord was in turn in accordance with the doctrine of the salvation of the people. Therefore, one does not hesitate for a moment to say that the doctrine of the dogmatists is the doctrine of Holy Scripture.

[↑] On the other hand, however, Dr. Walther also justly objected to this Ohio public confession in [Lehre und Wehre, 1882, p. 107](#): This decision of an entire church body, consisting of laymen as well as church servants, has no equal in history not only of the Lutheran, but also of the so-called Protestant Church in general; only the Pope's Church has achieved something similar. It should be borne in mind that, according to that document, not only have all the present pastors, a considerable number of whom have not even read the main writings of the so-called “teaching fathers of our Church”, but even the dear lay people have been led to profess a doctrine “such as has been by and large ever been taught by the teaching fathers of our Church.” Never before has a guileless, innocent crowd belonging to our Church been more irresponsibly abused by its leaders and thus led to deny their old Protestant foundation of faith, and even to profess something they cannot know what it is! It would be difficult to introduce a worse papism within the Lutheran Church! Here one is vividly reminded of that Papist legend which Luther once held

against the crypto-Zwinglyans, who said to the Lutherans, “It is enough that you believe the body that Christ means,” Luther writes that the papists told the following: “The story is told that a doctor of theology, meeting a charcoal-burner on the bridge at Prague and taking into account that he was but a poor layman, asked him: ‘My good man, what do you believe?’ The charcoal-burner answered: ‘I believe what the Church believes.’ The doctor: ‘And what does the Church believe?’ The charcoal-burner: ‘The Church believes what I believe.’ Later, when the doctor came to die, the devil so severely troubled him as to his faith that he knew not where to turn and found no rest until he said: ‘I believe what the charcoal-burner believes.’” [Taken from [Christian Dogmatics](#), vol. 2, p. 429, n. 55] — So now even a poor layman in Ohio must answer the question, “What do you believe about the Election of Grace besides what is written in the Formula of Concord?” If one asks him further: “How has this doctrine ever been taught by the teaching fathers of our church?” He must answer: “Just as our Ohio Synod teaches it.” But if one finally asks him: “How do you know this?” he must say, if he wants to be honest, “I know that because our professors say so.” “May God have mercy on a synod which calls itself Lutheran, and yet plants such a faith and confession in its members!”

Just as the whole supplement makes the confession of the Formula of Concord a meaningless game, so too the implanted words: “by and large” make that confession a miserable waxy nose, which everyone can twist at will, even for those members who have read the dogmatists. The members of the Ohio Synod must already admit in that declaration that their teaching fathers, in part in a different way from the Formula of Concord, presented the doctrine of the election of grace, as we read on p. 69. Yes, it is an undeniable fact that some of the later ones were aware of their own deviation from the doctrine of the Formula of Concord. Not only do many dogmatists of the 17th and 18th century expressly testify that

their doctrine of the Election of Grace is not that of the Formula of Concord, namely that they speak of an Election of Grace in the narrower sense, whereas the Formula of Concord is about an Election of Grace in a broader sense, but there are also those dogmatists, otherwise recognized as orthodox, who rebuke the doctrinal presentation of the Formula of Concord and declare it unbiblical. The Wittenberg theologian [Caspar Loescher](#) (the father of [Valentin E. Löscher](#)), for instance, writes in his *Theologia thetica*: ‘The word predestination has a wider meaning, however, not in Scripture, but in the symbolic books. So we must again distinguish between the symbolic and biblical meanings of this word; the former is the wider meaning, and the latter is the narrow and restricted one. The former one has no place here, except that we reject it; but this one has its place here. For we are presenting this doctrine from Scripture, and so this must also be done with words of Scripture and in the sense that they have in Scripture,’ p. 248. If we take the fact that already [Jacob Heilbrunner](#) in his theses *de praedestinatione* et al. that there has recently been controversy as to whether the language by which the word “election of grace” is interpreted in a broad sense to all people is the actual or, as the other part suggests, an improper way of speaking, one has to agree that the old dogmatist J. [Heilbrunner](#) is certainly right in that he teaches that it is better and more advisable (yes, peace is also necessary for the sake of the churches), that the doctrine of the general love of God, of the general merits, etc., should be opposed to the Calvinistic doctrine that the grace of God is not a general one, rather than to set the sentence (that the election of grace is universal), a sentence that is suspect of ambiguity, and is nowhere found in Scripture, against the Calvinists. J. Heilbrunner himself points out that the Book of Concord at the beginning of this article notes that the theologians do not all use the same words in this article. (See [Der Lutheraner, March 1, 1880 on Thesis 9](#) concerning the Election of Grace.) One should be all the more grateful to the Formula of Concord

for resisting the dissimilar and ambiguous expressions of the theologians by means of the confession contained in [Art. XI](#), and all the more strictly should we adhere to the doctrine of the Formula of Concord!

[↑] But the most alarming remains “the condition that what pious theologians have taught will therefore also be in accordance with Scripture and symbols. He who believes a statement of faith because it comes from a pious man must be satisfied in idolatry. That is why the Ohio Synod, with their Declaration, also denied the main principle of the Church of the Reformation. The Formula of Concord explicitly states that our confessional writings, too, are to be regarded only as testimonies, as a unanimous declaration of our faith. The principle of faith, however, the source, rule and norm according to which all doctrines and teachers are to be directed and judged, is only the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testament. It also says: We therefore also profess the unaltered Augsburg Confession, “not because it was composed by our theologians, but because it has been taken from God's Word and is founded firmly and well therein” (See the beginning of the Comprehensive Summary of the Solid Declaration.) [[SD Rule and Norm 5](#)] While Luther is recognized as “the most distinguished teacher of the Augsburg Confession” in the Formula of Concord, those who understand the Election of Grace to be only the general way of salvation for all people tend to disregard Luther and to call upon him later. There is no shortage of individual teachers among these, like [Sebastian Schmidt](#), who teach: “God's election or predestination has been made by pure grace, without any merit of the works, and also without any consideration of these works, indeed even without any consideration of faith, as if the latter had induced predestination through its worthiness, whether it was its own or an attributed God.” [Aphorismi](#) p. 294, but most later theologians unfortunately departed from the truly biblical teaching of the Formula of Concord, which led to many misunderstandings. In contrast to [Samuel Huber](#), who

taught a changeable election that includes all people, and who already in his time had chastised faithful Lutherans of Calvinism, the dogmatists came across this expression, according to which they taught that God had elected in view of faith; — Since they only wanted to oppose this expression to false doctrine, such things did not condemn them, although they lost the right way to teach about the eternal and saving election of grace, because they increasingly only replaced the purpose of God with the universal order of grace, “For before the time of the world, before we existed, yea, before the foundation of the world was laid, when, of course, we could do nothing good, we were according to God's purpose chosen by grace in Christ to salvation, Rom. 9:11; 2 Tim. 1:9.” (Formula of Concord Part II) [[SD XI, 43](#)]. Already in the Apology it is emphatically stated [[Ap IV \(II\) 84](#)], “experienced consciences can easily understand [and would not, for a thousand worlds have our salvation depend upon ourselves].” But just as the members of the Ohio Synod now teach that Election in the strict sense depends on good conduct or constant faith, so almost all of the newer theologians, even those who would be believers, teach that man's salvation does not rest solely in God's hand, but in man's own hand in the final analysis, that is, in man's own free and personal decision, foreseen by God; whereby God is robbed of the honor, that we owe our salvation to Him alone, and the same idolatrous way is given to man. — The doctrine of the Formula of Concord, that it is false and unjust to teach that not only the mercy of God and the most holy merit of Christ, but also in us is a cause of God's election, — is denied! While the old Luther doctrine that the elect are only saved by grace, but the rejected are only condemned for their unbelief, is offensive to the wise and prudent of this world, one falls on the horrible ingratitude toward God and wants to let salvation and therefore also the Election of Grace be based on faith in such a way that this finally becomes a work of man,

which man should only accomplish with the help of divine grace. In order to cover this rationalistic finding, they use the formulation that came from the dogmatists, that men are elected in view of faith, and interpret it as if the Lord Christ had not chosen His own from the world, as he says John 15:19, but from the state of faith, i.e. as if they had chosen Him by their faith; but he says John 15:16: “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you!” In the Holy Scriptures the above-mentioned formula is not found, nor in the Lutheran confessional writings, so the Ohio Synod adopted an “only legitimate” doctrine that is found only in the private writings of dogmatists. On the other hand, the [Synodical Conference held in Cleveland in August 1884](#) [[German text](#); [English translation in *Walther's Works: Church Fellowship*, pgs 351-412](#)] bore witness to the Theses written by Dr. Walther, whose theme was: “How reprehensible it is to want to establish matters of faith from the writings of the fathers and to bind consciences to their doctrinal decisions.” There it was first proven that this is against the Scriptures, because it is against the authority of the Holy Scriptures, which according to Gen. 4:2 and 2 Tim. 3:15-17 is the only true source of all knowledge in matters of faith, which is perfect in itself according to these Bible passages, to which Acts 26:22, Luke 16:29 and Rom. 16:17 are added. From the latter passage it is clear that there is no source of knowledge “beside” the Scripture; therefore, everything that is taught beside Scripture should be rejected, even if it comes from the so-called Christian consciousness, or from enlightened reason, or from the writings of the teaching fathers [*Lehrväter*!] Great people also make mistakes! Ps. 62:10. [[from Luther's German](#)] The passages Matt. 5:20-21, Matt. 15:9, John 4:41-42, where the authority of believers is rejected, contain an explicit warning against falling back into the theory of tradition. But as has been shown in the second place, it is also contrary to the teaching of Scripture, for it is against the nature of the faith of Christians, which according to Scripture is based solely on the Word of God

and for this reason alone is divinely certain. Only God's Word can bind the conscience, that is why according to Is. 8:20 one should consult the written Word of God, the law and testimony, i.e. God Himself. One should not despise prophecy, but also respect the writings of the fathers as a precious gift, but according to 1 Thess. 5:21 [*sic, not 5:30*] one should test everything! Woe to those who, contrary to Matt. 15:9, waste their labor with human doctrines and bind their conscience to the writings of the fathers, but to those who imitate the noble Bereans, Acts 17:11, and who at last can say with divine certainty with those Samaritan believers: “We have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.” John 4:32-42.

XII. [^]

The outbreak and course of the Election of Grace Controversy. [[F.A. Schmidt begins his battle \(354\)](#); [Schwan calls for General Pastoral Conference, 1880 \(365\)](#)] [The first General Pastoral Conference in Chicago \(365\)](#). [The Thirteen Theses as the sum of the Election of Grace doctrine \(386\)](#) [[Luther's letter of 1545 on Predestination \(391\)](#); [Error on Conversion \(396\)](#);]. [The second General Pastoral Conference at Fort Wayne \(399\)](#). [The Real Point of Contention – Conversion \(403\)](#).

1879—1881. [^]

“In the Lutheran Church itself, there will have to be a hard struggle if the truth is to remain.” This word, which was spoken at the Jubilee Synod in 1872, was, as we have already noted in the previous chapter, like a prophecy which was to be fulfilled in the controversy about the doctrine of the Election of Grace, which broke out seven years later, in 1879, and which troubled the Church, the outbreak and course of which we will try to describe in the following.

Since the large number of synod members had made it necessary to set up district synods, and since the general synod, which until then had met every three years, had to meet as a delegate synod from 1875 onwards,

the second delegate synod was held in St. Louis in 1878. It was part of the task of these delegates to elect two professors, one theological and one English teacher for the theological Concordia Seminary in St. Louis on behalf of the Synod. Each delegate was free to propose for these posts whom he considered suitable, but it was also asked whether the person proposed was in every respect qualified for such an important office. As soon as a justified objection was raised, it was customary to refrain from the person proposed. So it happened that the names of the Professors [F. A. Schmidt](#) and [W. Stellhorn](#), as well as those of the Pastors [P. Eirich](#) and [G. Stöckhardt](#), who was still in Saxony at that time, were mentioned, but also dropped. [↑] The first three left the Synod soon after. Prof. F. A. Schmidt, at that time in Madison, Wisc., already belonged to the Norwegian Synod, but in the meantime he has become the bitterest enemy of the Missouri Synod. Dr. Walther writes in the [February issue of *Lehre und Wehre* of the year 1884 \[p. 56\]](#): “It was only out of consideration for our dear Norwegian sister Synod that F. A. Schmidt was not elected professor in St. Louis. But it was very important for him to be elected, because under May 7, 1878, Prof. Schmidt wrote to the District President S. W., who was a member of the electoral college, on a postcard which is still in his hands today, among other things literally the following: “L. W. As I was in W. near Str. I heard that I was being considered for the vacant English professorship or even the other one in systematic theology, and whereas Pastor Koren *) will probably do everything in his power to thwart my calling, I wanted to inform you that Pastor Tressel informs me in letters received yesterday that the committee of the Ohio Synod will (under certain circumstances) recommend me for Columbus, a call I could hardly refuse. For my part, I do not wish that the Missourians would have tender consideration for the Norwegians,

*) President of the Iowa District of the [Norwegian](#) Lutheran Synod.

and then I have to go to Columbus after all. — A few days later the Delegate Synod was held and Prof. Schmidt was disappointed in his expectations. When he at that time showed himself willing to accept a professorship in the Missouri Synod, he had demonstrably long since read the [Western Synodical Report of 1877](#), but at that time he did not yet protest against this Synodical Report with a single word; only afterwards, when he had been able to convince himself of the merits of his position through Prof. Schmidt's work, he was able to make a decision. It was only afterwards, when he felt insulted by Professor Walther in particular (for Schmidt attributed his non-election to him, as the following shows), that he set about attacking the doctrine of the election by grace contained in that report as a Calvinistic, even crypto-Calvinistic doctrine. On January 2, 1879, Prof. Schmidt wrote to Dr. Walther: “I can no longer go along with... this, I must no longer be silent...”, among other things. Dr. Walther, did not answer this until February 8, whereupon Prof. Schmidt wrote: “Your silence, however, has done me great harm, not because I thought I had first received a *testimonium heterodoxiae* (testimony of an erring faith) on the same — for I received this sufficiently at the Delegate Synod.” Not being elected professor had done it to him. Since now the long-time president of the Central District, Pastor H. C. Schwan, a nephew of Pastor F. Wyneken, who died in 1875 in San Francisco, had been elected General President of the Missouri Synod (after Dr. Walther had resigned this synod office because of overburdening), Prof Schmidt also exchanged letters with Pastor Schwan and threatened already on July 7th of the same year to possibly (if things stayed like this) go public with an explanation of his dissent. *) Within the Synodical Conference, of which Prof. Schmidt was also a member at that time, it was expressly

*) At that time President Schwan invited Schmidt and his brother-in-law Allwardt to visit the old District President O. [Fuerbringer](#) for the purpose of a colloquium; but Schmidt refused to travel to Pastor Fuerbringer, whose thorough erudition and independence is known to everyone.

agreed that the Conference was to control any disagreements that might break out; the members of the Conference should therefore take the proper course with their respective concerns, but should not open a public polemic (in publications) against each other. Prof. F. A. Schmidt, however, who believed he had been slighted by the Missouri Synod, was not afraid of causing a schism in the Church, and therefore he began a public fight against the Missouri Synod, as if it had become a Calvinist sect! So in January 1880 he published his theological periodical, called *Old and New* [*Altes und Neues*], and already in the No. 1 issue he declared that he had to sound the alarm, that it was an open, determined fight he intended against this new crypto-Calvinism. Although these attacks were mainly directed against Dr. Walther, Walther abstained from any personal polemic during the whole following year, in order not to be blamed for this annoying dispute and the threat of a church split. Only that he and his colleagues objectively tried to present the Scriptural and confessional correctness of Missouri's doctrine of the Election of Grace and to correct and adjust any careless and misleading expressions that appeared in Missouri's publications. But from Missouri it was appealed to the then President of the Synodical Conference, Prof. Lehmann in Columbus, Ohio, with the request that he should call together an extra meeting of the Synodical Conference for the purpose of looking at the doctrinal dissent that had come to light, discussing it fraternally, and thus removed with God's help. Unfortunately, Prof. Lehmann declared himself incompetent to such a measure at that time, that it was not within his area of responsibility. As soon as Prof. Lehmann had died on December 1, 1880, the then Vice President, Prof. Larsen, ordered a public colloquium between the theological faculties within the Synodical Conference. This was opened in Milwaukee on January 5, 1881. It was agreed to discuss the doctrine of the Election of Grace based on the Holy Scriptures and placed Romans 8:28 and Ephesians 1:3-6 as the

basis for the discussion. On the fifth day, the representatives of the Ohio Synod declared that they could not stay any longer due to certain circumstances. Since a final agreement was not reached at this colloquium, it was suggested that a later colloquium be held over the year, but in the meantime both sides should abstain from publishing articles about the dispute. Prof. [Schmidt](#) explained that he could not agree to this, because he was commanded by God to lead this dispute. Thus, finally, the Missourian side declared to him: “Well then, you want war, you shall have war.” After Dr. Walther had calmly accepted for a whole year all denouncements and blasphemies of the opponents, had treated the disputed doctrine only objectively, exegetically and historically, and had again made the offer that the opponent should only give up his personal attacks (while this offer was rejected with the declaration that the war that had been started must be continued by God's command), then that word that Dr. Walther gave as answer was an act of pure self-defense. From his position in the Norwegian Synod, in which he is still functioning as a professor, Schmidt carried the Election Controversy into the Missouri Synod; three of his brothers-in-law and a number of malcontent pastors who were not blood related, took his side. Whoever wanted to could now vent his rage [*Mütlein kühlen*] on those whom he had long since looked at with aversion. It could hardly be expected other than that the trial which now dawned for the Lutherans within the Synodical Conference would reveal the thoughts of many hearts. “It is no wonder,” Dr. Walther wrote in his *Illumination of Stelhorn's Treatise* [*Beleuchtung des Stelhorns'chen Tractats*, 1881; [German & English “Preface”](#)], “that now so many pastors, but also some laymen, even whole synods, read with joy everything that is written against Missouri. Secretly, even in the Synodical Conference, many were already enemies of our synod; but the situation was such that they had to duck if they did not want to make themselves suspicious; but now that a dispute has arisen in which our Synod is accused of false doctrines, it is thought that the time has finally

come in which one can decently shake off the tiresome yoke without suspicion, and even take the credit for being a courageous fighter for the pure, unadulterated truth even in the face of Missouri; then one can sing: We live a life of liberty! One hoped to get rid of Missouri soon, Schmidt had already declared in his opposition paper: “May the Colossus of the Missouri Synod break into a thousand pieces!”

The Missourians were previously accused of having put forward an absolute and blind doctrine of predestination in the most recent synodical reports from the Western District, and an essay on the doctrine of the Election of Grace, which reproduced the doctrine of the [Synod of Dort](#), had already been published twelve years ago in *Lehre und Wehre* [[Großberger 1873?](#)]. The latter essay came from the midst of an Eastern conference, and was taken up by the St. Louis editorial committee, while Prof. Schmidt himself was a member of that committee. However, since it contained passages that were misleading, such as that “grace overcomes even the most wanton quarrelling and defending against it”, these passages have already been corrected twice by the author and replaced by words that are almost taken from the Formula of Concord. However, no Missourian has ever dreamed of teaching that God does not want all men to be saved, but has predestined a number of them to damnation, that Christ did not die for all and every man, that God's calling is not a serious one for all men, that God does not want to bring all men to faith and keep them in faith until the end; that God has, after he has chosen a few men, passed the others by, and the cause of it is not their wanton reluctance, impenitence and unbelief until the end, but God's mere pleasure! But this is the teaching of the Synod of Dort people, who are counted among the resolute Calvinists, a teaching which Missouri abhors, rejects, condemns and curses with all its heart as a blasphemous one. With grave

injustice they were called the Missouri Synod of Dort; rather, the Altenburg Synodical Report contains no less than nineteen pages in which those Calvinist teachings are refuted. Among other things it says: The Lutheran Church rejects the doctrine “that God does not want everyone to be saved, but condemns their sins without looking at them, and that they cannot be saved simply because of God's counsel, purpose and will,” but teaches that “they themselves are guilty that they heard the Word, not in order to learn it, but only to despise it, to blaspheme and revile it, and that they have opposed the Holy Spirit, who wanted to work in them through the Word,”; she also teaches that “such contempt of the Word is not the cause of God's providence (*vel praescientia vel praedestinatio*), but of man's perverse will.” These doctrines are supported by many proofs and testimonies in the Altenburg Synodical Report. There it is also shown from numerous passages and from Calvin's own words that one sees from his doctrine what is in the heart of the natural man, for by nature we too think as Calvin did. His doctrine was a devilish logic, the product of an unenlightened reason that dwells in us, just as Adam and Eve wanted to lay the guilt of their sin on God. Calvinist error also dominates the whole of pantheistic philosophy of all times.

But if such a clear and explicit rejection of the Calvinist doctrine can already be found in those Western District synodical reports, how is it that the reader here would like to ask that the Missouri Synod is nevertheless accused of Calvinism? The Western District had already for many years dealt with the topic at their conventions: Only through the teaching of the Lutheran Church God alone is given all glory! Now that this sentence had been proven by the most necessary doctrines, namely by the Word of God, by the holy sacraments, by redemption, etc., it was finally time for the doctrine of the Election of Grace.

From this it was taught in 1877 that we have to owe our Election, on the basis of the Holy Scriptures, to the mercy of God alone, according to Rom. 9:15-16. It also follows from Ephes. 1:3-6: “Anyone who thinks that election consists in the fact that when a person converts, it is only now that the good Lord chooses him, is greatly in error.” — — “The whole of modern Christianity is designed to make people think that they are great saints, and that they are better than other people, and therefore also go to heaven. On the other hand, we will have no cause there to praise ourselves — —, but all the elect and all the angels of heaven will have only God's grace to praise. It is all, all grace, that, brethren, must be our guiding star, so that we do not take away the glory of our dear God.” — And this is also here already in the exposition of Eph. 1:4 emphasized that God has graciously looked upon us, who are by nature an abomination and something to be abhorred! before his eyes, in his Son. We are not, then, freely chosen by an arbitrary election, but, as the apostle expressly states, in Christ. Although p. 25 of the Synodical Report does not actually mention Calvin's opposite doctrine, it does say: “It should also be noted that the apostle expressly says that we are chosen in Christ; hence it is godless doctrine to say that our election was first made by God in eternity, and only then, so to speak, was He able to make his Son carry out His counsel. Conversely, Christ is the eternal reason, and because, and to speak humanly, after God the Father wanted to give His dear Son for the lost world of sinners, therefore and only then, without ceasing to be God, could He choose all those who would believe in this His Son to the end. From Rom. 8:29-30 it is also clear that God did not simply choose us to go to heaven; “Let no one say ‘O, I am chosen; may I live as I wish, I will go to heaven;’ for by the fact that a

man lives godlessly, he proves that the good God was compelled to count him among the rejected. — God has not only chosen for salvation, but also for the whole Christian life. No one goes to heaven but the one whom God leads into heaven by this way; but that we go this way is not our merit, but God's free grace. From Rom. 8:29 it follows that the way that God's grace goes with the chosen ones also includes the cross and tribulation.” From Rom. 8:29 it follows that everything that the dear God wants to do for the poor sinner is included in the Election of Grace. The first link in the chain of our salvation is the election (which He has made [or foreknew] beforehand, that is, which He has recognized or chosen out of love as His own, as Joh. 15:16 [*sic? not John 10:13?*] and Acts 2:23 say), the second link is the decree, the third is the call, the fourth is justification and the fifth is glorification, which alone takes place in heaven above. —

Such is the main content of the condemned Synodical Report, all Theses of which are taken literally from the Formula of Concord. Thesis III, for example, reads: "The Lutheran Church teaches that it is false and unjust to teach that not only the mercy of God and the most holy merit of Christ, but also in us is a cause of God's election, for which God has chosen us to eternal life." In the explanation of these words it says, among other things, p. 51: "God has foreseen nothing, nothing at all in those whom he has decided to save, what would be worthy of salvation, and even if He admitted that He had foreseen something good in them, this could nevertheless not have moved Him to choose them for this reason; for all good in man comes only from Him, as Scripture teaches." These words, which are under Thesis III, were already used by Professor Schmidt in the No. 1 issue of his opposition paper as proof that the synodical report contained "soul-dangerous

Cryptocalvinism”, that was the leaven against which one had to protest vigorously!! Whoever compares these attacked words with Thesis III, which is taken from the Formula of Concord, will find that they contain the same thing. According to the Latin text it says: it is false and unjust to pretend that even something within us is a cause of election, and in even stronger words any cause that would be within us is rejected in the summary of the Formula of Concord, in the Epitome. — From this it is already clear that Schmidt and his followers attack not only the doctrine of the Missouri Synod, but rather the confession of our Church of the only cause of the election of the children of God; if one asks what, according to the teaching of our present opponents, is to be the decisive reason and therefore the cause of election, it is said in some people that faith which endures to the end precedes election, in others that faithful conduct is the cause of election to salvation. In *Old and New II*, p 7 it is said that faith is the “moving cause of election” to God. Our Formula of Concord rejects the claim that something in us is the cause, and yet faith is something in us! Our opponents cannot refer to the Lutheran symbols, so much the more they prefer to refer to the dogmatists, who since [Aegidius Hunnius](#) are accustomed to teach that the election was made in view of faith (*intuitu fidei*). Whoever does not teach this sentence with the others, takes up the cause of the Calvinists! (See in Chapter XI [[p. 345](#)]: The latest doctrinal position of the Ohio Synod). Since under Thesis III, according to which nothing in us is a cause of God's election, (Ephesians 1:5-6, Romans 9:15, 1 Corinthians 4:7), a) the work or sanctification of man, b) man's right use of the means of grace, c) man's self-decision, d) man's desire and prayer, e) man's unwillingness to resist — was rejected, the Western Synodical Report accordingly followed with point, f) also the faith of man cannot be the cause of God's election, which rests in His heart. While Lutherans have always taught that while

the cause of rejection is in man, for God has seen in those who are condemned their stubborn reluctance, impenitence and unbelief unto death, the cause of salvation in the elect is quite different. This is why [J. Gerhard](#) responds to the Calvinists' objection that if the cause of rejection is in man, then without doubt the cause of election will also be in man (a Calvinist conclusion of reason that our opponents also make from their point of view which they call “one and the same rule”) by saying “Unbelief and impenitence unto death, by which men are rejected by God, are deserving, actual causes of that rejection and condemnation; they arise from the fault of our corrupt nature and from the impulse of the devil; there are none of the works of the Father, none of the Son, none of the Holy Spirit. But the saving conversion to God and the faith by which we share in the merit of Christ for eternal lifeare not meritorious causes of either election or eternal salvation, nor do they arise from the forces of free will, but are the work of God,” — If faith is [God's gift](#), then, “it is not a cause of God's love but the consequence of it, and therefore [faith is not a cause of election but the consequence of it](#).” Therefore, no matter how much good God foresees in the chosen ones, this good cannot be the reason why God saves them, for God gives it to them first” (He must first [give](#) the Holy Spirit so that the chosen ones will believe the Word [through His grace!](#)). “This is why the Holy Scriptures do not teach anywhere that we become saved [because of](#) faith, but through faith by grace! To be saved through faith means nothing other than to be saved [by grace](#). In the other case, faith would be nothing more than an achievement, or a work which, strangely enough, should be considered before God, rather than all other works. God calls to us: “Come to the wedding,” all is ready! It is also God who puts the

wedding dress on us, He has foreseen that He will put it on us, He has given us faith. God has put faith in the decree of election; faith belongs in the golden chain which God has forged, so to speak, with which he draws me from hell and from earth to heaven. The first, so to speak, is that he has chosen me; the second, that he has created me; the third, that he has redeemed me; the fourth, that he has brought me to faith; the fifth, that he is sustaining me; the sixth, that he is introducing me to eternal life. Here belong all the passages that testify that faith is not our work. Col. 2:12; John 6:44-45; Hebr. 12:2; 1 Cor. 12:3; 1 Peter 1:5: “Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” God wants to keep us for salvation by faith. He has locked faith into the chain as a link from eternity; no one is elect who does not come to faith. But the Hand of eternal love has planted in a man that he comes to faith; it has not grown on the ground of his heart. Phil. 1:6. He must make a beginning, a continuation and an end, or we are all lost. Although J. Gerhard, Quenstedt and others use the expression that God has chosen us in view of faith, they nevertheless keep themselves in a way that makes them very different from our opponents, for Gerhard writes: “We do not say that predestination has its cause in the foreseeing of faith, but that view (*Ansehung*) of faith is part of the counsel of election.” He himself adds: “There is a great difference between these two sentences.” The latter only refers to order. Quenstedt also writes: “Faith is a part of the order established by God in election.” *) (See the [Western Synodical Report](#) p. 84.)

*) In the [May 1872 issue of *Lehre und Wehre*](#), Dr. Walther's answer appeared against G. Fritschel,

[↑] Under date of Sept. 5, 1880, while at the Canadian District Synod in Stonebridge, Can., the General President H. C. Schwan arranged a special general pastoral conference to Chicago, Illinois, noting that nothing had been done by the Synodical Conference to resolve the doctrinal controversy that had broken out over the doctrine of the Election of Grace (see above), he said that there was nothing left for the Missouri Synod to do but to seek to restore doctrinal purity within its own boundaries, so he took responsibility for this step and hoped that no member of the Missouri Synod ministry would be left behind from this conference unless he was held back by extreme hardship at home. About 500 Missouri pastors rushed to this conference, which was opened on September 29, 1880, in the church of Pastor [A. Wagner](#)'s congregation. — From the exactly recorded

who had attacked the Missouri Synod in [Brobst](#)'s *Monatsheften* because they had declared, albeit with explicit calling on the faithful theologians of the 17th century, that one could, strictly speaking, not talk like that: God has elected in view of faith (*intuitu fidei*). Besides, the Synod approved the axiom: “God has chosen only those who believe, but not because they believe”, but that the [\[Missouri\]](#) Synod took issue to one of the dogmatists' doctrinal statements, the expression “in view of faith” is an unfortunate terminology, G. Fritschel exclaimed under the mask of pious horror: “What a gross insult against the Lutheran Church, what a disgrace!” Against this Dr. Walther responds among other things as follows: “One is seized with melancholy that a man who so far placed the peculiarity of his [\[Iowa\]](#) Synod, that it strives for progress in doctrine, immediately declares it an indelible shame, which rests on us by rejecting not the doctrine but the terminology (the presentation) of the dogmatists of the 17th century in a single point as inappropriate and strictly speaking as confirming a false doctrine, which these theologians themselves abhor. What kind of party anger must this be that can enter such a polemic?” Secondly, Dr. Walther proves that the members of the Missouri Synod were by no means the first to say that the formula *intuitu fidei* not only unclearly indicates the relationship of faith to the election of grace, but that it even allows, and even has already experienced, an interpretation that is harmful to the doctrine of free will. Dr. Walther proves this

[proceedings](#), which appeared in print in St. Louis, [[translated into English in Walther's Works: Predestination](#), CPH 2018, p. 49 ff.] we report first of all that also there the formula *intuitu fidei*, i.e. the election had happened in consideration or in view of faith, was discussed. — Against the conclusion of reason, which Prof. Stellingma made: if God rejected in view of unbelief (which nobody denies), he must have chosen in [view of faith](#) — Prof. Walther asserted that the latter did not follow at all. “One must start out from the correct statement, which is also placed in the center of our Formula of Concord, namely that man can do nothing for his [salvation](#), but [everything](#) for his [damnation](#). It follows already from the actual fundamental claims of proof and from other rightly understood doctrinal articles that God saw nothing good in man when He chose him, because after sin there is nothing good in man, no principle by which He can

with an essay by [Musaeus](#), in which he writes, the excellent Dr. [Aeg. Hunnius](#) (who came up with this formula) was made to feel scruples not only by Calvinists but also by a number of our own theologians, because they saw that if faith were the cause of the conclusion of predestination, it must also hold within itself a dignity and goodness that would make God move from eternity. Against this Hunnius had thus declared that faith was the [instrumental](#) cause of the decree [[Ratschlusses](#)] of predestination; Musaeus, however, thinks that this phrase is also somewhat harsh, and that there is also a difference between the taking of Christ's merit (by which the believer is [justified](#)) and the decree of [predestination](#), which is an act of God in God. “This is why quite a few theologians have not wanted to call faith in Christ a cause of the decree of predestination,” to which Dr Walther remarks: “These were evidently 'Missourians' who were already haunting the old theologians at the time.” — Finally, Walther deploras [Pastor Brobst](#), who gives himself up as the tool of such an attacker, because he uses the monthly [Monats-Hefte](#) as a rampart against the Missourian castle. — This whole article of Walther, along with the notes on p. 139, was published during the St. Louis Jubilee Synod, when Prof. F. A. Schmidt was in St. Louis. Schmidt also read it to Pastor Brobst in St. Louis, and asked him: “How does that suit you?” Prof. Schmidt recounts with joy afterwards that Brobst had answered: “I want to improve.” That was how Prof. Schmidt stood [at that time](#). Who has changed his point of view now, him or Dr. Walther?

work the good, — but He foresaw everything in him that damnation can work, because man is exceedingly active for evil. Because this is so, the old dogmatists had to constantly defend themselves against synergism. When someone hears the sentence: Elected in view of faith, rejected in view of unbelief, he will surely think: as in man is the power to unbelief, so also the power for faith! Finally, Pastor Rohe, who was on the side of the opposition, said that he could not harmonize the present doctrine (according to which the formula *intuitu fidei* should be omitted) with the earlier doctrine of the Missouri Synod. In the first two volumes of *Lehre und Wehre*, contrary statements from the pen of Dr Sihler and Pastor Fürbringer had appeared. Pastor Mees, for his part, read out several sentences from these essays, from which it is clear that the opponents cannot make much capital for their doctrine from these articles, but because that formula was *intuitu fidei* used there, Dr. Walther explained: “One can see from this fact that in those days we still tolerated the second form of doctrine (of the later dogmatists) among ourselves.”

Professor Craemer: “But not anymore.”

Dr. Walther: “With the fact that I said ‘We tolerated that at that time’, I do not want to say: ‘But not anymore’, but: that was not really the voice of the Synod, but the private voice of Dr. Sihler and Pastor Fuerbringer. It was not my own voice, the one who is the editor, appointed by the Synod as such, and also a teacher of dogmatics. I have never taught like this. Anyone who says so is lying. *)

*) Although the students of Dr. Walther (with the exception of his opponents: F. A. Schmidt, Stelhorn and von Rohr) testify that when he came to the Election of Grace in dogmatics, he used to tell his students: “In

While some simple-minded people were seduced by the pretence of the opponents that, in their teaching, faith comes first (namely, before what they call election, while election, as Allwardt says, is the seal of persistent faith and accordingly, can only occur when the end of faith — salvation — has already been attained, which would not be a predestination == *praedestinatio*, but a post-destination — *postdestinatio*), but according to the Calvinist-Missourian doctrine faith follows and is thus made to stink, we are, before the proceedings of the Chicago Conference are reported further, quoting from Dr. Walther's *Illumination of Stelthorn's Treatise*. First of all, Stelthorn's fame, as if he had all the faithful theologians on his side, is refuted there already with only one quote from M. Chemnitz's *Handbook* [*Handbüchlein*], which was one of the bases for the writing of the Formula of Concord: “So also the election of God does not follow our faith and righteousness, but rather everything goes before it as a cause of it all, because those whom He has predestinated or elected, _

this locus, place the dogmatists aside, for they teach about it in a contradictory way, and adhere strictly to the Formula of Concord!” — so one continues on Ohio’s side nevertheless to chastise Dr. Walther of falsehood, because he is, for example, in conflict with [Konrad Dietrich](#), for example, and still teaches that election is that action of God in which He according to the purpose of His will, solely from His grace and mercy in Christ has decided to save those who will continue to believe in Christ to the praise of the glory of His grace. — The subordinate sentence “who will continue to believe in Christ” does not in any way indicate the cause of the election, but is only a description of the elect. One has looked up the old, not yet printed sermon manuscripts of Dr. Walther, but nowhere and never the formula “In view of faith” has been found or heard. Where in the world can one find a phrase of the Formula of Concord that justified the accusation as if it placed the cause of election in the faith of man and not merely in God's mercy through Christ? — “The Formula of Concord claims that those who persevere in faith are elected, but not that a man is elected because he perseveres in faith, even as the pious are saved, but not because they are pious.”

He has also called and justified them, Rom. 8.” [[Rom. 8:30](#)] This passage, which was also held out to him and Pastor Allwardt at the conference because it is based on God's Word, Rom. 8, Stelhorn was well aware of! — Dr. Walther then proves to him, also on p. 20 ff., that the latter stated a manifest falsehood, as if the [Calvinists](#) had said exactly the same thing on this point as those in St. Louis now claim.

Dr. Walther writes about this in his [Illumination of Stelhorn's Treatise S. 18](#) ff [[Predestination](#), p. 213]: “If the Calvinists rejected election in view of faith, they did so only because “they teach an absolute election.” For they teach that God created and elected a number of people for salvation out of sheer arbitrariness, the other portion also for damnation out of sheer arbitrariness As for those created and chosen for damnation, God decreed to leave them in their perdition, not to have mercy on them, and to pass them by, not to let them be redeemed, not to call them earnestly, not to offer them faith nor to give them faith, not to offer them the grace of conversion efficaciously, but to cast them out to hell without any mercy, for the revelation of his strict righteousness, for the sake of their unbelief and their sin, from which, however, He did not want to save them. We reject and condemn this Calvinist doctrine as blasphemous from the bottom of our hearts and, on the contrary, teach with all seriousness that God has loved all men from eternity... (See the Thirteen Theses below) ...and that, therefore, all those who are not chosen are not chosen and are eternally lost, only for the sake of their wanton and obstinate opposition. But at the same time we also believe that those who are chosen are not chosen for the sake of their foreseen faith or for the sake of any good thing that God would have foreseen in them, but solely because of His

mercy and for the sake of Christ's merit acquired by all men. We believe, teach and confess that God did not, as the Calvinists say, first choose them unconditionally and absolutely for salvation and then decided behind them to give them faith as a means of attaining salvation, but that God chose them at the same time for all that 'so that', as our confession speaks, 'our salvation and what belongs to it creates, works, helps and promotes', thus, of course, also and above all, for faith; as the Formula of Concord expressly says when it says p. 705 edition of Müller, [pp. 478-479 of the St. Louis edition](#), quotes the Scripture passage: 'And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed'. [[Acts 13:48](#); [Triglotta p 1065](#); [FC SD 11, 8](#)] We therefore believe, teach and confess that according to God's Word the righteous God could not have absolutely elected any person for salvation if He had not let him be redeemed, and if He had not chosen him for faith, that is, if He had not decided to give him faith at the same time; for outside of Christ there is no salvation (Acts 4:12) and 'without faith it is impossible to please God'. [[Heb. 11:6](#)] So if the Calvinists do not want to know anything about election 'in view of faith', this means something quite different from our rejection of this doctrine. The Calvinists do this, as I have said, because according to their teaching, God first chose for salvation absolutely, without regard for Christ and faith; we do this because God's Word teaches that God has chosen to give us not only salvation but also faith by grace, because the election to salvation and faith coincide. It is therefore an infamous perversion of our teaching if we are accused, as often happens, of excluding faith from the election of grace, and therefore of disregarding the doctrine of salvation through faith alone. ... Rather, it is precisely we who consider faith for salvation so necessary that we believe, teach and confess that God, according to

Rom. 8:19-30, first chose the elect to be called, and therefore to faith (not according to the chronological order, but according to the nature of the matter), to justification, and then for salvation. But we reject a doctrine according to which it might seem that God has decided to grant men salvation by grace, but not faith by grace from eternity, but has seen from this whether man himself will decide to come to faith.” — As an example of the fact that one could also reject one and the same thing in other matters, but in such a way that each party could have a motive that is different from others, the rejection of the auricular confession is also quoted there. This is rejected by the Calvinists, because they do not believe that the ministers of the church are given the power to truly forgive sins, but it is rejected by the Lutherans because according to the Papists, absolution is not founded on the power of the Gospel, but on the enumeration of all sins. — Finally, Dr. Walther writes there: If it is asked, did not God really choose all those of whom he foresaw that they would culminate in faith and remain in it until the end? This is our answer: Yes, of course; we have never rejected teaching in this way, but rather, understood correctly, expressly approved of it. (See [Lehre und Wehre VII. IX. XVIII.](#)) What we have rejected is that the election was made “in view of faith”, in the sense that God chose us because he had foreseen our faith or even our good “conduct” (conduct of man) against grace. As for the proceedings that took place in Chicago, they were to take place on the basis of the [Article 11 of the Formula of Concord](#), so that in the end we would be reunited in one and the same confession. However, it became apparent that the opponents did not agree with [paragraph 5](#) as it stood from the outset. There it says: “The eternal election of God, however, *vel praedestinatio* (or predestination), that is, God's ordination to salvation, does not extend at once over the godly and the wicked, but only over The eternal election of God but *vel praedestinatio*, i.e. God's decree for salvation does not go especially over the pious and evil, but only over

the children of God, who were elected and ordained to eternal life before the foundation of the world was laid, as Paul says, Eph. 1:4-5: He hath chosen us in Him, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ.” Already here it is clearly proven that the Formula of Concord only speaks of the so-called election in the strict sense. In general, the difference between a double election (“in a broad and narrow sense”) is quite alien to the Formula of Concord. On the other hand, the opponents argued that the Lutheran Church has long been talking about an election in the broader sense, which they ostensibly find in the eight points, [paragraph 15-22, of the Formula of Concord](#), where the means of salvation are stated which constitute the main part of the election. They say that when this way of salvation: Whoever believes will be saved, is presented to men, there will be two kinds of people, those who do not believe and are lost, and finally those who believe to the end. In the case of the latter, they say, who remain as the product of the divinely ordered means of grace, the second part of election takes place, for, say they, the second part of the election of grace is the application on the part of the Judge of the stipulation of the universal will to save, which is based on what God has foreseen. — From this it was replied that the determination of the path of salvation necessarily belongs to the doctrine of God's election, on which He wants to lead His elect to eternal life, but that it is therefore not necessary to speak of an election of grace in the broader sense, the Bible and the Confessions know nothing about such a election, in neither of them is the expression: election of the means. “It is also a strange expression,” remarked Dr. Walther (see p. 3 in the minutes); a means is not a elect one after all. Of course, one cannot speak of the elect without speaking of the means; for this would be the same as if someone wanted to present the doctrine of reconciliation and wanted to say only that Christ lived and suffered and died. This would not be the doctrine of Reconciliation, for if I am to present it, I must show how the man created innocent from the beginning

fell into original sin and real sin; I must also show how God is holy and therefore angry about sin. The doctrine of the law must be included until the actual act of reconciliation is reached. This is also the case here. First the teaching must begin with how God has redeemed the whole world. First the general decree of salvation must be set forth; anyone who did not consider this would not share the word properly. For this reason, the Formula of Concord also has this description of the doctrine by which our Lutheran Church was saved from Calvinism. What we teach is not an absolute election, but a conditional one. The conditions are: the grace of God, the merit of Christ, and faith; but these are conditions that we do not fulfil, but that God Himself fulfils for us and in us. Whoever now says that man fulfils them teaches what we however do not yet want to accuse the opponents, Pelagianism. But surely they should not always do us wrong and ascribe to us an absolute election when we say: God has decreed that the elect will certainly attain salvation. Election is not just a bare decree! Whoever believes will be saved, but the eight points here only show how God, who sincerely wants all to be saved and is working on them, in the same way that He wanted to make all saved, really leads the elect to salvation. That He does this in each of the individual chosen ones is stated in [paragraph 23](#): ‘He has also chosen each and every person of the elect to salvation, and has also decreed that he wants tokeep them in the way that is now reported, by his grace, gifts and efficacy, to bring them thereto.’ Consider the expressions, for example, ‘decreed’ [**or ordained**]. What God decrees must be done; if it were only to say: he wants to do it, it would be something else, because he wants to do it in the whole world, and yet it does not happen. When God sets something before Himself (decrees), He also carries it out; but what He only wants to do, that may possibly not happen. Just as the Formula of Concord understands the doctrine of election, also

from [paragraphs 45 — 47](#), where from the principle of God (Latin: *in arcano suo proposito*) the consolation is drawn for the believers that it is not only God's pleasure to make them saved, but that He has also purposed it, that is, He will really carry it out. Note also the expressions used in the Latin edition of the Formula of Concord (*elegit, decrevit*), which leave no doubt about the understanding of the confession, and the Scripture passage used for consolation in [paragraph 47](#). Paul says Rom. 8:[28] 'who are called according to the purpose'. With it he teaches that God has made it His purpose to bring the believers (for of course only those who believe are mentioned) to salvation, and from this such a person, according to the confession, is to draw the conclusion: Who will separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, etc. This is not, as our dear brothers who oppose us say, merely attached in such a way that it is an election of persons, but rather this is the main thing, for the sake of the first points (the eight points) in the confession. It is only through an *aequivocatio* (i.e. when two quite different things are given the same name) that we can speak differently of an election. This is the election, that God brings certain persons on the path of salvation, receives them, albeit with interruptions, and finally makes them unfailingly saved. Therefore faith is not to be introduced here as the cause; for that is what it is about, whether I too can be certain of my salvation. My faith does not make me certain of this, for I must know whether I will remain in faith, for if not, I will be lost. Now if you are serious, do not speculate with reason, but know whether you can happily today or tomorrow on your deathbed, believing that I am chosen; do not fear the devil, the world, my flesh; I look to God to keep his promise to me, and he will not let me fall into unbelief and sin or false doctrine. But whoever is not in the true faith, it is not God who

has revealed to him in His Word, but the devil has revealed to him that he is elected. It is also certain that the true believer always walks the narrow path with fear and trembling, as the Word of God demands, precisely because in faith he knows that he is a chosen child of God. Least of all, the opponents' doctrine of election is the pure one, since it is based on foreknowledge, or it is a judicial verdict. A judge is just; he looks at a person as he is according to his law, and he decrees accordingly. This would lead to the result that it would no longer be an election of grace at all. It would be as if I were to show and tell someone the way: 'Now go on, and you shall reach your goal and obtain this and that', and then I would say afterwards, 'You see, I have chosen you for this'. This person might well say, 'When I myself carry him to his goal'. Only He Himself is the faithful God, who has chosen and bears us, as He says John 15:16: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain."

On Saturday, October 2 (see [page 52 of the minutes](#) [[p. 93 of Predestination](#)]) the evaluation of the definition of Election of Grace presented by Prof. Stelhorn was continued. Dr. Walther declared that to understand by Election of Grace as a judicial application, based on the providence of God, is reasonable, but not confessional. Contrary to the Confessions is 1) the statement of the basis. For the basis is nothing other than the cause; the Confession says the exact opposite of the fact that God's foresight is the basis for the election. Thus we read in the Epitome, p. 557 [[FC Ep 11, paragraph 20](#)]: It is also rejected "that not only the mercy of God and the most holy merit of Christ, but also in us there is a cause of God's election, on account of which God has elected us to everlasting life." It is also added that through such erroneous teachings all consolation is taken away from Christians. If the election of grace is merely that God has foreseen something in us, and has been induced to choose us, how can we then

comfort ourselves? For He alone knows, we do not know. Then it doesn't do us any good. For we can always think: God knows in advance, perhaps He knows that I will be damned, or even if He knows that I will be saved, I do not know. We can see from Luther that in his time, people in his time usually had to face terrible temptations, Luther himself even to the point of death, because they always thought: God knows in advance what will happen to me, so my fate is determined. Now when Luther had such associates, he said: Yes, of course, one must admit that God knows everything in advance, even who will be saved and who will not. But it is the devil who leads you to cling to that. This foreknowledge is not revealed to you in the Word. God has instructed you in the Word if you want to know whether you are one of the elect. Likewise the passage in the Formula of Concord p. 723 [paragraph 88](#), which goes back to Rom. 9, disputes with this definition — not out of merit of works, but out of the grace of the one who calls. 2) Not only what is said here is wrong in principle, but also the description of the nature of election is erroneous, if it is to be a judicial application of the general way of salvation. According to our confession, it is rather a cause of salvation, a decree of salvation, a bringing to eternal life, a making partaker of salvation. This is already clear by [paragraph 8](#) p. 709 of the Formula of Concord: “The eternal election of God, however, not only foresees and foreknows the salvation of the elect, but is also, from the gracious will and pleasure of God in Christ Jesus, a cause which procures, works, helps, and promotes our salvation and what pertains thereto; and upon this [divine predestination] our salvation is so founded that the gates of hell cannot prevail against it, Matt. 16:18, as is written John 10:28: Neither shall any man pluck My sheep out of My hand. And again, Acts 13:48: And as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.” From this it is clear that the Election of Grace on the chosen one is also a cause of faith according to our confession (taking care that it is not the only cause, for the Word

of God, Baptism, the Lord's Supper is also a contributory cause that aids to salvation). According to the definition presented by Prof. Stellhorn, however, the application of the way of salvation would only be a judicial act of God, not a creating, working, promoting, helping! It is only after what is to happen in man has been done that God enters and pronounces the judgment: he shall be saved! This definition therefore presupposes the creation of salvation, the conversion. The conclusion of the eight points, where the sentence begins, speaks against this, in that it says: "And indeed, that is to say, it is of the utmost importance that all and every person of the elect, if he is to be saved through Christ, is so graciously considered, one should recognize it and hold fast to it that the election is not just an application, but a predestination, a decree, which is certainly to happen. — It became increasingly clear during these proceedings in Chicago that Prof. Stellhorn does not know, believe or teach any real Election of Grace, but only gives the name election of grace to the order of grace established from eternity, so that no one could say that he had none! Some readers of his writings, his *Treatise* and his [Examination of the Illumination](#) let themselves be misled by the fact that there is much talk in it about election, while the same is described as the order of grace, justification, the way to salvation and they are given the name election. Since these doctrines, without which the doctrine of the election of grace cannot and should not be presented and preached, are already known, familiar and undisputedly correct to the readers, some people do not notice the deception but think that this is in any case a correct teaching and fall to our opponents of today. But it also happened that already in Chicago quite a few people who had stood partly uncertain, partly completely on the side of the opponents arrived at clarity. Some of them openly admitted this, and one of them made the following statement on October 4 [[Director Krauss](#), [p. 65](#), [Predestination](#), [p. 105](#)]: "Through repeated consideration of the reasons advanced by Dr. Walther and recorded in the minutes (just read), and in further conversations..., I have come to the conclusion that my former position is untenable.

Holy Scripture teaches it and the Formula of Concord says that gracious election is truly ‘a cause of our salvation and what belongs to it.’ I must say that I have until now viewed this article in the Formula of Concord incorrectly. I am happy and thank God that I now see my error. And I pray that during the course of these days, God will yet bring my brothers from the opposition to the same understanding.” Since this declaration is accompanied by the remark that he would wait until the course of the negotiations leads to the “passing by on the part of God”, the following should be mentioned here: Dr. Walther pointed (after [page 85](#)) to Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans, where he says that the sentence that God chose a certain number for salvation after his mercy is comforting to troubled ones, and then continued: “We do not know which rule God is [[paragraph 57](#)] following in this regard.” (The Formula of Concord also says on p. 716: “St. Paul sets us a goal in these and similar questions, as: why God gives His Word at one place [to one kingdom or realm], but not at another [to another nation]; removes it from one place [people], and allows it to remain at another; also, that one is hardened, blinded, given over to a reprobate mind, while another, who is indeed in the same guilt, is converted again”). “But we know this for sure, why God did not elect certain people. These cannot say on the Last Day: ‘How can I be accused of being damned, for God did not choose me!’ No, God will tell everyone: ‘I would well have granted it to you — that's what our Formula of Concord says. — I did not pass you by, but I moved you often, called you often; yes, you may have been a believer for a while, but you are still clinging to the devil, the world and your flesh. The fault is yours to go to hell.’ But the believers will not say: ‘Ha, if only you (damned) had believed as we did, we have been converted and you have been and remained unbelievers. ... Rather, for all eternity the elect will not be able to praise God enough that he has pulled them wretched worms of sin, which would have belonged in hell, out of the mud

all the same. They will leave it to the good Lord to justify Himself that the others will all be thrown down into hell.”

The last sentence of the above words is also important, for although we do not teach Calvinist particularism, nor a two-part election, as will be shown below, the objection is raised against the particular election of the persons chosen for salvation and all that belongs to it, which is done by grace alone, that God would be unjust if he had not chosen all people in this way (strictly speaking, incidentally, a choice, called selection in the basic Greek text, can never be understood by all people in itself). It is certain that those who are lost will have no excuse; but just as in the realm of natural life there remain some mysteries that seem to clash with the justice of God (a mystery is not a contradiction, however), so it is even more true of the mystery of the election of grace (in which the true Christian always considers his own election to be the most wonderful because he does not recognize himself as better than others) that we do not have to judge God; But to all who hears His voice it will be revealed in the light of eternal life that God does everything with wise and holy purpose. It is an election of grace for us in our salvation. It is an election of grace revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures, not a trial as it takes place among men.

For a better overview, the doctrine of discernment concerning the election of grace, in so far as it exists between the present-day synergists, between Calvin and between the Lutherans who are faithful to the symbols, may be given in the following: Although the election of grace is based on God's general will of grace, according to which He does not want the death of the sinner, which is why the elect, by God's grace and power, would not approach their goal by any other means than through repentance and faith, it nevertheless follows from this order of salvation that those who despise it are condemned for their unbelief. The so-called election

in a wider sense, called the chief part by Stellohorn, thus results in a separation of people into two parts. Therefore, anyone who considers the universal plan of salvation that goes over all people to be the main part of the election must teach a twofold election of persons as the conclusion that follows the main part. Stellohorn describes this election, which he also calls the election of grace in the narrowest sense, as follows: “Because God is omniscient and knew already from eternity how people would conduct themselves toward his sacred order which He had ordained for their salvation, namely whether they would use this order or despise it, therefore He took note of this, and in view of it decreed which persons should be inevitably saved, and which should be inevitably damned. So, according to Stellohorn, there is a decision of God based partly on the provisions of the general way of salvation and partly on the omniscience of God, for God already knows that there are people who believe and finally become blessed, and again those who do not believe and are therefore condemned. He knows the success of his general counsel of grace, and no one would think that this final success should be a election of grace in the narrowest sense, unless Stellohorn taught us to call it an election of grace! But it becomes clear from this that this decree, which is based on the omniscience of God and is determined by the behavior of both believers and unbelievers, is a two-part decision that affects all men, and it is certainly obvious to anyone who compares even the beginning of Article 11 of the Formula of Concord, how very different the Election of Grace that precedes it is from Stellohorn's doctrine. There it says [[FC SD 4](#)]: “First, the distinction between the eternal foreknowledge of God (according to which he sees and foreknows everything beforehand) and the eternal election of His children to eternal salvation, is carefully to be observed. For that God sees and knows everything before it happens, which is called God's foreknowledge [[prescience](#)], extends over all creatures, good and bad; namely, that He foresees and foreknows everything that is or will be ... Matt. 10:29; Ps. 139:16; Is. 37:28” Furthermore, in contrast to this

divine omniscience on which Stellohorn bases his election in the narrow sense, the Formula of Concord reads as follows [[paragraph 5](#)]: “The eternal election of God, however, *vel praedestinatio* (or predestination), that is, God's ordination to salvation, does not extend at once over the godly and the wicked, but only over the children of God, who were elected and ordained to eternal life before the foundation of the world was laid, as Paul says, Eph. 1:4” — From this it is 1) clear that the object of this predestination is solely the children of God, and by no means the whole of humanity, on which the general counsel of God is carried out to one side or the other, whereas a follower of F. A. Schmidt teaches that the Last Judgment, which separates those to damnation on the left and to salvation on the right, is the election in the proper sense, because it is there that the separation is made. One can see from this that this party wants to have a trial instead of the grace that elects. 2) The Formula of Concord here makes a great difference between divine omniscience or Providence, which goes beyond good and evil, and between the eternal election, for this (the election of grace) goes only over the children of God who are ordained to eternal life. According to Stellohorn, these are only known in advance (not predestined), just as those dying in unbelief are known in advance; that is why he also claims that God proceeds according to one and the same rule on both sides. Anyone who, instead of divine predestination, bases his election on an omniscience that goes in the same way, which knows the “*conduct*” of every human being, must finally teach man's self-decision instead of divine grace, and fall on a synergism (man's own participation in his conversion and salvation). Therefore, on this side, faith *) becomes a work of man and as a

*) The members of the Ohio Synod love to say of election that it is obtained in view of the faith that takes the credit of Christ. No one among us denies that man

cause of movement in God (according to F. A. Schmidt) or, as Stelhorn says, as an explanatory basis adds to the two causes exclusively taught by the Formula of Concord, namely to the mercy of God and the merit of Christ. Anyone who teaches an election made “in view of faith” in such a way that this indicates the reason why God was induced to choose this or that person, must fall out on the side of the semi-Pelagian Arminians, who taught a decision of God based on the faithful conduct of man. Since this decree is a double one, this doctrine is closer to Calvinist teaching than to purely Lutheran teaching. Even among our opponents of today, it is said that if it is true that the sum total of those who persevere to the end and those who are condemned has been determined and counted in God's omniscience, this is a mystery that one prefers to keep quiet about.

[Calvin](#) likewise teaches a double predestination, which, as he says, is based on a dreadful decree, for apart from Christ and without regard for Christ and faith, some are indeed chosen for eternal life, but the others

becomes [justified and saved](#) through this faith, but where is it written that [election](#) is based on this faith? Just as love is a characteristic of faith, but by no means the [basis](#) for faith, so the saving faith in the elect is [a mark](#) of the election. Justification is a link in the chain of salvation according to Romans 8:30, and is made part of the believer through the appropriation of Christ's merit; but it is not by appropriating the election that one becomes a chosen one, for the chosen ones [have](#) been so from eternity, Ephesians. 1:4 before the foundation of the world was laid. That is why [Musaeus](#) already proved, as noted above [[p. 366](#)], that faith cannot possibly be in the same relationship to election as to justification. If a real Election of Grace were to be attained through faith, there could be no time-believers, because the Election of Grace only goes over those who become saved! That is why the elect remain elect, even during a temporary apostasy, as [David's](#) example shows, who went there for nine months without repentance or faith, and yet was a chosen one.

were from eternity by an absolute decree predestined to damnation as a demonstration of divine punitive justice! According to this, the same would be punished even before they were born. Since the number of those who, according to Calvin, are predestined to damnation is much greater than the number of those who are to be saved through fellowship with Christ, the first of the elect, Calvin's doctrine is based much more on an election of wrath than on an election of grace. Calvin's doctrine of predestination as a whole is admittedly not based on divine omniscience, nor is it based on divine mercy, but only on the unlimited omnipotence [**“God's sovereignty”**] of God, since from the very beginning everything that is and should become is concerned with his unalterable counsel. This decree is also frightening in that it is supposed to be a thoroughly secret one, for according to Calvin, just as according to Zwingli, the sacred means of grace, word and sacrament, should not be God's own testimony of His gracious and good will, but a deceptive semblance, whereby God condescends to let those who are predestined for damnation hear the Word of God outwardly, as if God meant it in his heart with most people differently than His Word reads. Even those who are named after Calvin must bring their inner spiritual nature with them, if the Word and the Holy Communion are to have any meaning for them. According to this Calvinist doctrine, the few chosen ones would be in an unconditional and unchanging state of grace from the very beginning, and would no longer need the preaching of the Law for repentance, according to the oral Word of the Gospel, whereby the poor sinner attains grace and forgiveness. We Lutherans do not know such ready-made saints. We know that God does not want to give the Spirit and faith to anyone without through the outward Word and sign (the holy sacrament). But anyone who, as a good Calvinist, speculates about the merely secret, inscrutable providence of God, will admittedly fear predestination as a fatalistic power hovering over him, and the more seriously

he asks for a certainty of eternal life, the deeper he will sink into temptation, which is why our confessional writings reject Calvinism for the very reason that it does not bring salutary comfort, but only harm to souls. In our Synodical Reports we also say accordingly: “There is no man who could say: Yes, perhaps I am not chosen, what good is it for me to be baptized, to hear the sermon?” Whoever speaks in this way leads the language of the devil, because the power to believe lies in the Word! (See the [Western Synodical Report of 1882](#). [[English in *Essays for the Church II*, pgs 106-148](#)]) The Formula of Concord also points to this on p. 720 [[FC SD 76-77](#)]: “The declaration, John 6:44, that no one can come to Christ except the Father draw him, is right and true. However, the Father will not do this without means, but has ordained for this purpose His Word and Sacraments as ordinary means and instruments; and it is the will neither of the Father nor of the Son that a man should not hear or should despise the preaching of His Word, and wait for the drawing of the Father without the Word and Sacraments. For the Father draws indeed by the power of His Holy Ghost, however, according to His usual order [the order decreed and instituted by Himself], by the hearing of His holy, divine Word, as with a net, by which the elect (who according to the Formula of Concord are forever in the heart of God) are plucked from the jaws of the devil. Every poor sinner [should therefore repair thereto [to holy preaching], hear it attentively, and not doubt the drawing of the Father. For the Holy Ghost will be with His Word in His power, and work by it; and that is the drawing of the Father.”

With such words, the Lutheran Confession points us to the Holy Scriptures, as to the letter of grace of God, in which we recognize the revealed will of God, of which it says [[paragraph 33](#)] “With this revealed will of God we should concern ourselves, follow and be diligently engaged upon it, ... and should not [attempt to] sound the abyss of God's hidden predestination, as it is written in Luke 13:24.” —

Our Formula of Concord hereby opens the father-heart of God to us and presents the biblical doctrine of grace,

which we hold to be the purely Lutheran confession. This is not based on mere omniscience, which views human behavior (according to the present synergistic error), nor on a secret will to power (according to Calvinist heresy), according to which man would be given to a blind fate, but solely on God's mercy and the dear merit of Christ. The election to salvation would have a very weak foundation, if our own faith were even one of the causes of it. It should first of all be emphasized once again that such an election, which out of pure mercy in Christ saves according to the intention of His will, which makes us partakers of the redemption which is as eternal as the election in God (Heb 9:12), in that it does not only save believers, but also makes faith work through the Word in those who are saved, cannot be a double decree, but must be a pure election of grace. Since only grace and salvation are acquired in Christ, He is the book of life, in which we become certain of eternal life through faith in His name and recognize ourselves as chosen children of grace. There is no book of death, although later teachers want to pretend a divine will of rejection. Election is God's eternal purpose in regard to the people to be saved, and no other. Predestination, according to the Formula of Concord, [[FC Ep XI, 5](#)] “extends only over the godly, beloved children of God, being a cause of their salvation, which He also provides, as well as disposes what belongs thereto. Upon this [predestination of God] our salvation is founded so firmly that the gates of hell cannot overcome it.” If the Formula of Concord in this sentence understood election, which is a cause of the salvation of the elect, in so broad a sense, as though the whole order of salvation were to be understood by it, it could not say the Election of Grace (of which it speaks) is for the pious children of God alone — for no one, except the most abominable Calvinists, will teach that the order of salvation and

what belongs to it, as, for example, the doctrine of redemption, of the means of grace, of repentance, faith, etc., is for the pious, pleasing children of God alone! Since these doctrines concern all people, it follows that the Formula of Concord, while from the beginning of Article 11 it has the pious children of God in mind, speaks of the Election of Grace in the narrower sense, only that it describes it more fully for the sake of practical application, as already indicated above in the Chicago minutes.

[↑] Already in the [January 15, 1880, Vol. 36, No. 2 issue of *Der Lutheraner*](#), Dr. Walther begins to show and to repeat in short sentences also for those readers who may not have read the synodical reports: “What our doctrine of the Election of Grace actually is, with which we also intend to remain until our death by God's grace. Then the dear reader may judge for himself whether our teaching is Calvinistic or whether it is not rather the pure doctrine of Luther, drawn from God's Word, our precious symbolic books and the most enlightened teachers of our dear Lutheran Church.” — This is followed in nos. 2-9 of the above-mentioned volume by thirteen sentences from the doctrine of the Election of Grace, to which testimonies from the *Book of Concord* and from the private writings of orthodox theologians are added, from which it can be seen that our doctrine is not a new doctrine that is unheard of in our Church, but the old, true Lutheran doctrine. These “Thirteen Theses” read as follows [excerpted from [Christian Cyclopedia](#)]:

Thesis 1.

We believe, teach and confess, that God loved the whole world from eternity, created all men unto salvation, none unto damnation, and that He earnestly wills the salvation of all men; and we therefore reject and condemn with all our heart the contrary Calvinistic doctrine.

Thesis 2.

We believe, teach and confess, that the Son of God came into the world for all men, that

He bore and expiated the sins of all men, and that He fully redeemed all men, none excepted; we therefore reject and condemn the contrary Calvinistic doctrine with all our heart.

Thesis 3.

We believe, teach and confess, that God calls through the means of grace all men earnestly, that is, with the purpose that they should, through these means, be brought to repentance and faith, also be preserved therein unto their end, and thus be finally led to blessedness, conformable to which purpose God offers them through the means of grace the salvation wrought by Christ's atonement and the power to embrace this salvation by faith; and we therefore reject and condemn the contrary Calvinistic doctrine with all our heart.

Thesis 4.

We believe, teach and confess, that no one perishes because God was not willing that he be saved, passed him by with His grace, and because He had not also offered him the grace of perseverance and was not willing to bestow the same upon him. But all men that perish, perish because of their own fault, because of their unbelief and because they contumaciously resisted the Word and grace unto their end. The cause of this contempt of the Word is not God's foreknowledge (*vel praescientia vel praedestinatio*) but man's perverted will which rejects or perverts the means and the instrument of the Holy Spirit, which God offers unto it through the call, and it resists the Holy Spirit who would be efficacious and operate through the Word, as Christ says: *Matth. 23:37*, How often would I have gathered you together, and ye would not. (*Form. of Concord p 718. par. 41.*) Therefore we reject and condemn the contrary Calvinistic doctrine with all our heart.

Thesis 5.

We believe, teach and confess, that the elect or predestinated persons are only the true believers, who truly

believe unto their end or yet at the end of their life; we reject therefore and condemn the error of Huber, that election is not particular, but universal and pertains to all men.

Thesis 6.

We believe, teach and confess, that the divine decree of election is unchangeable and that therefore no elect person can become a reprobate and perish, but that every one of the elect will surely be saved; and we therefore reject and condemn the contrary Huberian error with all our heart.

Thesis 7.

We believe, teach and confess, that it is foolish and soul-endangering, leads either to carnal security or despair to endeavor to become or be sure of our own election or eternal happiness by means of searching out the eternal secret decree of God; and we reject and condemn the contrary doctrine as an injurious fanatic notion with all our heart.

Thesis 8.

We believe, teach and confess, that a true believer ought to endeavor to become sure of his election from God's revealed will; and we therefore reject and condemn with all our heart the opposite Papistical error, that one may become or be sure of his election and salvation only by means of a new immediate revelation.

Thesis 9.

We believe, teach and confess: 1. That election does not consist in the mere fact that God foresaw which men will secure salvation; 2. That election is also not the mere purpose of God to redeem and save

men, which would make it universal and extend in general to all men; 3. That election does not embrace those 'which believe for awhile'" (Luke 8:13.) 4. That election is not a mere decree of God to lead to bliss all those who would believe unto their end; we therefore reject and condemn the opposite errors of the Rationalists, Huberians and Arminians with all our heart.

Thesis 10.

We believe, teach and confess, that the cause which moved God to elect, is alone His grace and the merit of Jesus Christ, and not anything good foreseen by God in the elect, not even faith foreseen in them by God; and we therefore reject and condemn the opposite doctrines of the Pelagians, Semi-Pelagians and Synergists as blasphemous, dreadful errors which subvert the Gospel and therewith the whole Christian religion.

Thesis 11.

We believe, teach and confess, that election is not the mere divine foresight or prescience of the salvation of the elect, but also a cause of their salvation and of whatever pertains to it; and we therefore reject and condemn the opposite doctrines of the Arminians, Socinians, and of all Synergists with all our heart.

Thesis 12.

We believe, teach and confess, that God has also concealed and kept secret many things concerning the mystery of election and reserved them for His wisdom and knowledge alone, into which no human being is able and ought to search; and we therefore reject every attempt to inquire curiously also into these things which have not been revealed, and to harmonize with our reason those things which seem contradictory to our reason,

may such attempts be made by Calvinistic or pelagianistic synergistic doctrines of men.

Thesis 13.

We believe, teach and confess, that it is not only not useless, much injurious, but necessary and salutary that the mysterious doctrine of election, in so far as it is clearly revealed in God's Word, be presented also publicly to Christian people, and we therefore do not agree with those who hold that entire silence should be kept thereon, or that its discussion should only be indulged in by learned theologians.

The reader will recognize that only through this confessional doctrine of the Election of Grace will God be given His glory "fully and completely", as the confession says, because this glory He shall have, that He alone saves. We may say the same of the content of these Theses, which are largely taken literally from the Formula of Concord, as the Formula for its part confesses with the words [paragraph 62]: "When we proceed thus far in this article, we remain on the right [safe and royal] way, as it is written Hos. 13:9: O Israel, it is your own fault that you are destroyed, but that there is help for you is pure grace on my part, [**after Luther's German**]." — But the Formula of Concord says with caution that we may go only so far as in this article, because, as Thesis 12 says, man neither can nor should search out more than what is revealed in Holy Scripture [**cp. FC SD paragraph 52**]. "There must be a difference between what is revealed and what is not revealed in the Word of God. For about this God... has still kept secret and concealed much concerning this mystery, etc." The reproach that Prof. Schmidt made to us, that it indicates a papal way of speaking of mysteries here, again meets here our church confession and our most distinguished teachers. The present doctrinal controversy shows that the Formula of Concord rightly says [**FC SD paragraph 52-53**].: "This admonition is most urgently needed. because

we cannot harmonize it, which, moreover, we have not been commanded to do.” Both the Calvinists and the Pelagian synergists want to make the incomprehensible comprehensible by drawing conclusions that are against God's Word. “The Calvinists take away God's glory by denying God's universal love and grace, and even blaspheme God by making Him the cause of sin, death and damnation. The Pelagian synergists, however, to which our opponents of today also belong, do not give God the honor He deserves, because they teach that in man lies not only the cause of damnation (which is true), but also the cause of salvation, namely, that some people are better than others, even if they do not say this so crudely.” (See Dr. Walther’s footnote to Proposition 12 in “[Der Lutheraner](#)” [p. 58]) It is still shown on [p. 58 in *Der Lutheraner*](#) that nowadays some people talk as the Lutherans about faith, and even that faith alone makes people just and saved, but nevertheless one can see especially in the works-driving sects that they also only give their faith for a good work, or for a condition and achievement that man must fulfill on his part, and not for a gift of grace, as Paul writes Eph 2:8: Thousands preach nothing but works under the name of faith, and so overturn the Gospel. Among the teachers who confirm Thesis 12 are Johannes Brenz and Chemnitz, Tim. Kirchner, together with Selnecker, as the three authors of the “Apology of the Formula of Concord” which was worked out against the Calvinists. [↑] In addition to what Luther writes on Genesis 26, one letter from Luther is particularly important, which Dr. Walther publishes under Thesis 11 under April 1, 1880 [p. 52-53], according to Seidemann of Dr. M. Luther's Letters, Open letters, and Theological Opinions, collected in full by Dr. de Wette. VI, 428 f. [[StL 21, 3225 #3332](#), not in *AE*]. This letter, which is said to contain the entire doctrine of the Missourian Lutherans, reads as follows: “It is true that God had elected and predestined some men

to eternal life before the foundation of the world was laid, while others have been rejected. But because God dwells in secrecy and his judgments are secret, we are not allowed to reach such a great depth, so we must descend upon Christ, to whom the Father has given all judgment. ... If you now let yourself be found in Christ by faith, then know that you are predestined. If you do not allow yourself to be found in Christ through faith, but instead persecute the Word, despise Christ and do not want to know anything about him, then know that you are rejected. For as you let yourself be found in Christ, so you are in God the Lord, because the Father has transferred all judgment to his Son. If, by the way, one should speak according to the divine understanding (as far as the immutability of God is concerned), the judgment must stand firm: that he whom God chose before the foundation of the world cannot be lost, for no one will pluck the sheep out of the hand of their Shepherd; but whom He rejected cannot be saved, even if he has done all the works of the saints. God's judgment is so unchanging. You must therefore also look only to the majesty of the God who chooses, so that you may attain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ Predestination therefore in no way makes it possible for any (people) who are children of God to become children of the devil, or of a temple of salvation. Predestination rather makes it possible for children of the devil to become children of God, or for a temple of salvation to come out of an idolatrous temple. Predestination rather makes children of the devil become children of God, an idolatrous temple to become a temple of the Holy Spirit, and whores to become members of Christ, because He Himself binds the strong and robs them of their household goods (Matt. 12:29) and saves them from the authorities of darkness and transfers them from shame into glory. But those of whom 1 John 2:19 applies went out voluntarily, fell voluntarily. And because they were foreknown as those who would fall, they were

not predestined. But they would have been predestined if they had been returned again and remained in holiness and truth. Take heed: This predestination of God is a cause for many to stand, for no one a cause to fall.” *) (Written on August 8, 1545).

*) Although, if Stellhorn were right, for example, the last sentence should be reversed and should read something like this: Standing fast is a cause of predestination, — yet Stellhorn has the cheek to tailor this passage, duly mutilated, to be cut in such a way that he wants to find in the sentence: “If they had remained in truth and holiness,” a reference to his doctrinal system based on works righteousness. In that letter Luther quotes the words of Prosper, a student of Augustine. The fact that it expressly states: Predestination makes children of the devil become children of God (through faith) cannot prevent Stellhorn from making even Luther a witness to his false doctrine. For with him it says of such words of Luther's: "Bird eat, or die! Let the following example show this: As is well known, Luther wrote the famous introductions to the Epistles to the Romans and Ephesians as early as 1522, three years before he wrote the letter against Erasmus, during the time when, as is admitted in Germany, he stood in sharp contrast to Pelagianism. Nevertheless, Luther must have taught after the manner of Stellhorn even then. Stellhorn achieves this by a willful twisting of the sentence: “In this (Ephesian) epistle St. Paul teaches first of all what the Gospel is — as it is provided and started out from God alone in eternity, that all who believe in it are just, pious and blessedhe does so through the first three chapters.” Aeg. Hunius, who is otherwise held up by Stellhorn, translates as follows: *In hac epistola docet Paulus primum, quid sit evangelium. quomodo a solo deo in aeternitate praedefinitum et per Christum aquistitum, et promulgatum, quod omnes, qui ei credunt, justificari, vivificari, salvari debeant.* This Latin translation Dr. Walther's also proves irrefutably against Stellhorn that Luther does not write here about the election of grace, but describes the Gospel as it goes out into the world according to God's will. This alone was decreed by God and earned, that all who believe it may be justified and saved; so says Luther; but Stellhorn underlines the word "it" and because the word “provided” stands next to it (=*constat*), whereby Luther wants to say: “It is certain that ...” Stellhorn relates the word “it” to the previous Gospel and claims: here Luther teaches: Only the Gospel is provided! So here Luther must teach the so-called election in a broader sense,

“This predestination of God is a cause for many to stand fast”, wrote Luther in the last days of his life, and it is this Scriptural doctrine that is consistently presented the Formula of Concord as a special source of comfort and strengthening in the face of temptation. Pastor Allwardt, on the other hand, confessed his false position in Chicago: “In temptation for the sake of his salvation, I cannot comfort anyone with the Election of Grace. I must use other passages.” When the writer of this book pointed out to Prof. Stellhorn himself that both the Holy Scriptures and the Formula of Concord has certain ("special") persons in mind for the Election of Grace, that even the third main part of the Small Catechism in its last words confessed the Election of Grace in its personal application to a certain hope of salvation as a decree for eternal life: “and will give me and all the faithful in Christ an eternal life,” Stellhorn answered to the horror of many of his brethren in the ministry at that time: “I do not know whether I am chosen in the strict sense!” He added: “I should believe and hope that.” (p. 21). But what kind of faith and hope is that which rests on uncertainty? (See Hebr. 11:1.) Prof. F. A. Schmidt also polemicized from the outset against the fact that our doctrine of Election by Grace so firmly assures the state of grace of Christians, even though the Formula of Concord itself always aims at it.

So, with our opponents today,

the continuation of the means of grace! It is a pity that Luther would teach beyond Stellhorn, who teaches that the way of salvation is the main part, but Luther should teach according to this perversion: The Gospel is alone the election of grace, namely as the means of grace! And this hoax the whole present Ohio Synod allows to be imposed on itself, because despite Dr. Walther's refutation, one reads this sophistic distortion once again in the Ohio Synodical Report of 1881, p. 17, below. What if Luther, who represented his writing against Erasmus until his death, were to come back today and read this distortion of his words? At a German university such a professor, as Stellhorn is, would be impossible; but in Columbus, Ohio, is this party man is the cock of the roost!

a second error comes to light, which is as old as the Roman Catholic doctrine of doubt, because already in his Examen of the Council of Trent M. Chemnitz reproaches the Roman teachers: They say that nobody can be sure whether he will be saved!: They say no one can be sure whether he will be saved! F. A. Schmidt writes today against us that we should not take away the fear of hell from the younger Christians, *) because as long as one does not find his name literally inscribed in the Bible among the elect, no Christian can be certain of his own future salvation, which would mean that he would have to take comfort in something unwritten. On the other hand, the Formula of Concord says of the pure Lutheran doctrine of the Election of Grace that it [[FC SD 11, 45-46](#)] “Thus this doctrine affords also the excellent, glorious consolation that God was so greatly concerned about the conversion, righteousness, and salvation of every Christian, and so faithfully purposed it [provided therefor] that before the foundation of the world was laid, He deliberated concerning it, and in His [secret] purpose ordained how He would bring me thereto [call and lead me to salvation], and preserve me therein. Also, that He wished to secure my salvation so well and certainly that, since through the weakness and wickedness of our flesh it could easily be lost from our hands, or through craft and might of the devil and the world be snatched and taken from us, He ordained it in His eternal purpose, which cannot fail or be overthrown, and placed it for preservation in the almighty hand of our Savior Jesus Christ, from which no one can pluck us, John 10:28. 46] Hence Paul also says, Rom. 8:28. 39: Because we have been called according to the purpose of God, who will separate us from the love of God in Christ?” According to the Latin translation, the sentence reads: “Therefore Paul builds the certainty of our salvation on the foundation of the divine purpose.” With the fact that these opponents claim

*) In [Old and New](#) I. p. 10 it says: “Christians are from day to day on trial between fear and hope, as between two millstones.” Truly a poor consolation! The Formula of Concord, on the other hand, wants to make use of this in Article 11 [[paragraph 25](#)]: “how, we can know, whence and whereby we can perceive who are the elect that can and should receive this doctrine for comfort”, p. 709.

that no believer can be certain of his election, and therefore also of his salvation, because, as the Lutheran confession says in short words, only the elect will be saved, they argue both against the confession and against the clear Scriptures, Luke 10:20; John 15:16; John 15:19; Rom 8:33-39; Eph. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13. However, this grave error, against which the [ninth convention of the Evangelical-Lutheran Synodical Conference in 1882](#) [[text](#)] protested, follows with necessity from the fact that those opponents let the faith that God must see precede the election as their cause and as the achievement of men, since now man cannot know in advance whether he will remain true to his faith, so he also cannot know with certainty whether he is an elect and will be saved. This is why it was already asserted against the opponents in Chicago: “If the election is to be based on the foreseen faith, this is hereby equated with a human work or merit; faith is thereby made a cause of the election, thus pure synergism is pronounced.” It was already testified to Prof. Stellhorn there during the discussions that the main difference lies in the doctrine of conversion. Either he made faith a self-determination of man, so that man's own participation would decide about hell and heaven, or he let faith be God's gift alone, in which case he had to admit "that God did not only decide to make the faithful blessed, but also to give faith to those who will be blessed (i.e. the elect). — This is why the Formula of Concord teaches in the article of free will [[FC SD 2, 60](#)]: “God the Lord draws the man whom He wishes [decreed] to convert.”

[↑] [A Fundamental Error in the Doctrine of Conversion](#)

became so obvious among the opponents of the old Lutheran doctrine of grace that that they themselves admitted that this was the real

difference. Although at the basic proof passage, Eph. 1:3-6, it is clearly written that God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has chosen us through Christ ... according to the purpose of His will, in praise of His glorious grace, nevertheless in this dispute it became more and more evident that the opponents make the election of those who will be saved dependent on the conduct of their human will. While the opponents had to admit that since Adam's fall into sin, the natural will has been caught in the power of the devil, that is, that the natural man cannot imagine, strive, and do anything but sin, as the Formula of Concord teaches in Article II Of Original Sin, the Columbus Magazine and the periodicals published by the Ohio Synod teach quite clearly that man can not only outwardly hear and contemplate the Word of God by natural forces, which we also teach in our Lutheran confession, but that he can also refrain from the so-called wanton resistance against the inner grace of conversion by natural forces. This omission of wanton reluctance is rooted only in the person who wills (in the subject which wills) and is entirely natural. Since according to this the person himself opens the door to the Holy Spirit, who is to convert him fully, by no longer wilfully resisting Him, the decision to convert and be saved would be placed in the person's own hands. But the Holy Scriptures teach that man is dead in sin, and that the carnal sense of the unconverted man is an enmity against God, Rom. 3:7. While he is dead in sin, he can take hold of evil with his will, but in no way of what is good. While he is dead in sin, he may well be able to seize evil with his will, but in no way can he seize what is good! Just as it is shown in temporal life that man can help himself to death, but cannot give life to himself, for no dead man makes himself alive, so it is the same with spiritual life, in faith in the grace of God, and even more so that the new birth from God is a new creation of God in

in man, brought about by the Holy Spirit, for it is God who gives life to the dead, and calls out to that which is not that it should be. “It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” Phil. 2:13: Of course, the conversion of a person is not without much sighing, fear and trembling, but it is the Holy Spirit who does this and opens the door of the heart, as it says of Lydia [[Acts 16:14](#)]: “Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.” If even in those who have already been born again there is still a reluctance in their flesh, which is why they have to complain with St. Paul: “I do that which I would not” [[Rom. 7:16](#)], and such reluctance remains until death, how much less can the unconverted man, who is nothing but flesh and therefore an enemy of God, refrain from willful reluctance! This proof is given by the Formula of Concord against the semi-Pelagians and the Philippists, and although the Ohioans and others want to defend themselves against the accusation as if they taught that man contributes to his conversion by his natural will, for the latter's will is only passive (*pure passive*), it is certain that they want to put into this passive behavior a property of the natural man, after which he has the strength to let go of willful reluctance, and thereby prepare himself in such a way that from now on his conversion must take place. To stand still in this way would in any case require an inner decision on the part of the natural man, which the natural man is incapable of, for his thoughts and aspirations are only evil. It is also contrary to all experience, after which a thief and other gross sinners have been converted, while good-natured and honorable people often become hardened. According to this teaching, the natural man, who until then had been hostile to God's will, would nevertheless suddenly have to prove a certain inner pleasure in the Gospel by standing still on his previous path out of his own instinct and will, and through this “encounter” the grace of God, and finally

cause his own election. *) — It is clear that, according to this teaching, the election should depend on the behavior of the person, the Lord Christ should not have said: I have chosen you out of the world [[John 15:19](#)], as those who were also in natural perdition, but He should have said: You are chosen as a result of your conversion! That is why the opponents rejected it when it was reproached to them that the children of God owe all spiritual goods, also their calling and conversion to the Election of Grace, Eph. 1:3, that also the confession in Article 11 of the Formula of Concord teaches clearly and unambiguously that God has taken into account the conversion of every Christian and has given counsel about it.

[↑] In the [Pastoral Conference held in Fort Wayne in 1881](#), where the last oral proceedings with the synergistic opponents took place, Dr. Walther gave these and others the following to consider: “You just do not believe what the Formula of Concord says [[FC SD 11, 44](#)]: ‘Moreover, all *opiniones* (opinions) and erroneous doctrines concerning the powers of our

*) Since Stellohorn perceived that his party, through the above doctrines, was falling into the ways of the Roman doctrines, which, through the so-called *meritum de congruo*, ascribe to the natural man the power to accomplish a good performance for the time being, Stellohorn taught that the Holy Spirit gives man free will, whereby he can either submit or not submit. But this doctrine is refuted in the Ohio publications by P. [Eirich](#), Stellohorn's like-minded associate: “It is nonsense... as if a man, by calling and prevenient grace, gets a free will and is endowed with powers of grace, and that the unconverted man then uses these powers of grace afterwards only for his conversion. ... This use of the powers of grace presupposed faith. There we have conversion before conversion.” No, truly, that's not the way things are. The best later dogmatists rejected [Latermann's](#) synergism as contrary to Scripture; if, however, several newer ones warm it up again, as Stellohorn does, it remains true: If a man is to come from death to life, he cannot do so if God would also give him life forces so that he could awaken himself! He would then have to be awakened to it, so that he could awaken himself! But that is nonsense.

natural will are thereby overthrown, because God in His counsel, before the time of the world, decided and ordained that He Himself, by the power of His Holy Ghost, would produce and work in us, through the Word, everything that pertains to our conversion.’ ... God saw how I would conduct or handle myself. But according to His omniscience, He knows it in advance, and since He knows now that I will conduct myself well, He says: ‘That one is elect.’ A horrible doctrine! No, the counsel God took was: ‘How do I bring the poor sinner into heaven?’ There He decided that He will bring me to the knowledge of the Gospel, work faith, strengthen faith, preserve me in temptation, and when I falter to raise me up and preserve me until the end. That is my comfort. I have drawn it from Scripture and the Confession, and it appears that you do not want to admit that. You say: ‘That certainly belongs with it. But man must accomplish it and God sees whether he accomplishes it.’ You are led to ruin when you reject what is said as Calvinism that ‘God did not merely reckon me in the sense that He envisioned how I would behave, but in the sense that He decided to bestow this grace upon me as He says: ‘I have selected you from the world.’ He says, ‘out of the world,’ not ‘I have chosen you from among the believers’ ... And I also believe that about me. Had God not chosen me, I would not have come to the knowledge of Christ. I also would not have sought the Gospel had it not sought me. We count all that as election, not according to our faith, but according to Scripture. And the Confession says the same thing.” [[ref. Predestination](#), p. 174-175]

According to this doctrine of ours, although the election only concerns those who “will certainly be saved”, it is not an arbitrary pattern, nor can it be compared to a threatening cloud hanging over us, as the Calvinist doctrine is, which gives no certainty. On the contrary, we teach: Behold, God was serious about your calling, “Whoever now stands in faith, let him believe the promise of God, that God

will preserve him and save him. Every believer should consider himself an elect, that is, one whom God has certainly decided to save. In addition, one must also teach that all those who do not believe or fall away are themselves to blame for this; they themselves alone are to blame for this, not that God has denied them election; God has not predestined anyone to damnation.” Dr. Walther himself said: “— — We do not want to give man a share in his salvation, but give glory to God alone. That is our interest. As the Formula of Concord says [[FC SD 11, 87](#)]: ‘By this doctrine and explanation of the eternal and saving choice [predestination] of the elect children of God His own glory is entirely and fully given to God, that in Christ He saves us out of pure [and free] mercy, without any merits or good works of ours, according to the purpose of His will.’”

Since today’s synergism has also become dominant in Protestant areas, as recently theologians in Philadelphia admitted, it is not surprising that our synergistic opponents do not lack followers. In his *Kirchliche Glaubenslehre*, the sainted Philippi also confesses: “It is only too much in the nature of man to want to owe righteousness and salvation not only to grace alone but also to himself.” — Even among our opponents of today it became increasingly clear that the accusation of Calvinism which they made against us was intended to give a semblance of justification to their synergism. — Although the [Formula of Concord, in Article 2 “On Free Will or Human Powers”](#), is based on Scripture in relation to the synergists: John 8:34, Eph. 2:5 and 2 Tim. 2, and calls and declares as the teaching, faith and confession of our Church [[FC SD II, 7, 18](#)]: “Hence the natural free will according to its perverted disposition and nature is strong and active only with respect to what is displeasing and contrary to God; but from its innate, wicked, rebellious nature it resists God and His will hostilely, unless it be enlightened and controlled by God's Spirit”,_

so our opponents now nevertheless teach that in the natural man, because of the freedom left to him, it is possible to refrain from resisting the work of God's grace, and this cessation of resisting is the reason on which the election is based! (See the [Rostock “Gutachten” of May 1884](#) [by [Dieckhoff, etc.](#)], printed and approved by Prof. F. A. Schmidt, and the [refutation written by Prof. A. L. Gräbner](#), which is printed in [Lehre und Wehre, Sept. 1884](#)). First of all, it is certain that if man, as the above doctrine promises him, were in the position of such “[omissions \[of resisting\]](#), etc.”, he would already have made himself a friend of God out of an enemy, for Christ says: “He that is not against us is for us,” Mark 9:40 and Luke 9:50, and he who does not rebel against God is also doing the will of the Father in heaven! — In the second place, the doctrines of the Holy Scriptures are taught in opposition to this, which already says in Gen. 6:5 that the human heart is only ever evil in its imagination of the thoughts, so that no freedom to refrain from this evil is granted to the natural man. According to John 3:6 and Rom. 8:5-7 all men without exception are carnally minded and: “To be carnally minded is an [enmity](#) against God.” An enmity that did not resist would not be an enmity at all! That is why we also teach with the [Formula of Concord in Part II Art. II paragraph 20](#) [text from [paragraph 59](#)] : “[Man resists](#) the Word and will of God, until God awakens him from the death of sin, enlightens and renews him.” The freedom of the children of God is the goal towards which the Holy Spirit is working; the Formula of Concord also teaches [[paragraph 60](#)]: “Although God does not force man to become godly ... yet God the Lord draws the man whom He wishes [decreed] to convert, and draws him in such a way that his [darkened](#) understanding is turned into an [enlightened](#) one and his [perverse](#) will into an [obedient](#) one. And this [just this] is what the Scriptures call creating a new heart.” — It is God who works such things in us (Phil. 2:13), and it only happens

through his grace that we believe His holy Word! But He does not do this with such a natural necessity as prevails in the kingdom of power, but through the supernatural but spiritual power of His Word, which is applied to the reason and will of man. So it is only as a result of conversion that man, as a reborn child of God, can be merry and willing to do good. Already at the beginning of the year 1882 Prof. Schmidt declared in *[Old and New](#)* that he stood quite differently from the Missouri Synod in the doctrine of conversion, which is why Dr. [Walther](#) shows with the following the actual point of contention (*[Der Lutheraner](#)*, vol 38, No. 12:)

[↑] [The Real Point of Contention.](#)

In No. 12 of the publication *[Old and New](#)* the editor finally admits what actually the difference between his teaching and that of the Missouri Synod really consists. For he writes on p. 184: “The real difference between us and the Missourians is this: Missouri claims that the cessation of willful, obstinate reluctance to convert is grace,” which the editor and his followers do not believe! Rather, they believe that man is able to refrain from malicious or willful and stubborn reluctance by his own natural powers. It is not surprising, then, that these people acted so angrily and furiously against our doctrine of the Election of Grace. This is precisely because they are a kind of Pelagians, who claim that man can and must do something to convert and be saved; to claim that man converts and becomes saved by the grace of God alone is a completely unreasonable doctrine. Praise be to God that he has now delivered into our hands our enemies who are so fierce. For they could not have revealed more clearly that they are our enemies because they are enemies of the true Lutheran faith.

In 1520, [Luther](#) issued 20 concluding statements on infused faith, in which Luther had already fought the same false doctrine against the papal theologians, which our opponents are now setting up and defending as theirs, and indeed as the genuine Lutheran doctrine. For this is what Luther writes in the [ninth](#) concluding statement:

“Some say that it is enough that man does not put an obstacle in the way, that is, that he has no intention of sinning, and that man can do that of his own free will. Others make it even worse when they say that man, whether he is well harboring an evil purpose, he could remove the obstacle and make it not there, or he can make a good purpose for himself from the same freedom of his will. All this is ungodly and heretical. For, as St. Paul writes Gal. 5:17, ‘For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, . . . so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.’ So now the Spirit is not able to dampen the flesh and the lusts of the flesh, much less a man who is without the Spirit and is overcome by evil lust. But out of error and ignorance that man is a liar and vain apart from the faith of grace and therefore, as long as he is in the sin of unbelief, has an obstacle and evil purpose, they do not see this great obstacle and meanwhile let themselves dream of another obstacle, namely of the purpose to sin; that it is not a sinful purpose if man does not believe God and makes His Word a lie. Just as it is not in man's power to believe God, so it is not in his power to put away the sin of unbelief and thus also to remove the obstacle to grace. But grace alone, as it gives faith, so it also removes the obstacle, for it prepares man and destroys sin” ([XIX, 1733 f.](#) [[StL 19, 1427-1428](#)]) Woe to the listeners whom your preacher wants to make believe that they must and could remove the obstacle, that is, the malicious reluctance, for they need no grace!

The convention of the [Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference, which took place in Chicago in October 1882](#), also protested against the synergistic idea that a person can give up willful resistance to the inner grace of conversion, not by grace but by his own natural forces or by virtue of his free will. It is proved on [p. 15](#) of the minutes of that meeting that this quite terrible doctrine not only falsifies and nullifies the doctrine of the Election by Grace, but also overturns [the doctrine of justification](#) by grace alone, solely for the sake of Christ and solely by the faith worked by God. According to the false doctrine of our opponents, however, as Prof. Schmidt says in his Theses, election in the strictest sense “presupposes the behavior of men”. But while [becoming righteous](#) before God must have the same “presuppositions” as salvation, the righteousness of man before God must also depend on the same presupposition of good conduct! — In this matter, then, the crown of all doctrines must be at last preserved, the doctrine of justification, so that this article, with which the Church stands or falls, may remain pure, and that St. Paul may also be right with us, if he is right with Eph. 2:8 exclaims: “[By grace! — and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God!](#)”

For those who wish to learn more about the doctrine of the Election of Grace and the doctrinal controversy in question, here is an overview of the publications of the Missouri Synod relating to it.

First of all, five volumes of [Lehre und Wehre](#) (*Doctrine and Defence*) from 1880-1884, volumes 26-30, are worthy of special mention: The essay written by Pastor G. [Stöckhardt](#): “[Scriptural Evidence for the Doctrine of the Election of Grace](#)”. This article is contained in five monthly issues from June to [October 1880](#) and gives the Scripture statements about the election of grace in the following

order: 1) How does Holy Scripture describe the Election of Grace? 2) What does Holy Scripture teach about the certainty of the Election of Grace? 3) To what does Holy Scripture refer Christians so that they may be certain of their election? — This topic had been the basis for the proceedings at a Southeastern Conference of the Western District in 1880, whereupon Pastor G. Stöckhardt freely edited the relevant minutes and at the same time, in the above article, substantiated, by scriptural evidence, the [Thirteen Theses](#) (namely 5, 9, 10, 11) already [published in the *Der Lutheraner* at the beginning of the same year](#). — Dr. [Walther](#) wrote the following in the volume for 1880: “[Dogmatic History of the Doctrine of the Relationship of Faith to the Election of Grace](#)”, furthermore a reprint of a *locus* in the German [Enchiridion, composed by Tim. Kirchner](#). The same is about “[God's eternal election](#)”. Since [Tim. Kirchner](#) is the main author of the famous [Apology of the Formula of Concord](#), which has been acknowledged as correct everywhere, Dr. [Walther](#) remarks at the end of [p. 329](#), on the presentation of the doctrine of the Election of Grace as presented by [Tim. Kirchner](#), the following: “Hopefully no one will smell Calvinism in it. Anyone who would do so would simply make himself ridiculous and clearly betray that he knew neither Lutheran nor Calvinist doctrine, or that he was an enemy of the doctrine of our Church, who, since he cannot refute it from God's Word, would at least try to awaken a dread of it by blaspheming it as Calvinism.

In the [year 1881 of *Lehre und Wehre*](#) there is a detailed article by Dr. [Walther](#) on: “[The Synergistic-Pelagian Doctrine of Election of Grace](#)”, which is included in the issues from [May](#) to [September](#). It is proven there that such a doctrine, as it is held by today's opponents, has ever been rejected in the best times of our Church.

In the [1882 edition of *Lehre und Wehre*](#), the [July](#) and [August](#) issues, there is among other things an answer to the question: Is the later doctrine of the election by grace really the

original Lutheran and confessional one?” Already in an [article immediately preceding this essay](#) the author Dr. Walther on [p. 249](#) had expressed the hope: “The history of the American Lutheran Church will one day, when the most hated persons will have left the battlefield, proclaim that Missouri had simply returned to the Church of the Reformation in respect to the doctrine of Election of Grace”.

The [1883 edition of *Lehre und Wehre* contains a Foreword written by Prof. Pieper](#), in which he proves in detail that the Lutheran Church in America would have lost its character of being the Church of the Reformation if it had been based on Prof. Schmidt and his comrades, because the latter denied the Lutheran doctrinal principle: “Holy Scripture alone is the source and norm of the Christian faith”. The opponents denied that free will is nothing, and in connection with this, both, that man becomes righteous and saved by grace, and that a Christian should be certain of his salvation in faith. Finally, in this Foreword, Prof. Pieper proves (see [February issue](#)) that, according to the opposing doctrine, justification, if given at the price of the cessation of willful reluctance, would no longer be a gift “without merit”, but a bargain, even if the gift on the part of man was only small. The specific difference between the Law and the Gospel would be completely eliminated on the opposite side. If one wants to give even a small human achievement as a basis for grace, grace is nevertheless completely abandoned, because one more or less is not important here: “Grace is not grace if it is not completely grace.” This Foreword concludes with an important quote from Luther. The [1883 volume also contains an article written by Pastor G. Stöckhardt](#) on the vindication of the old Lutheran doctrines of the Election of Grace and of Conversion against

the exhibitions and attacks of modern German theology, and it proves conclusively that it is no glory for our opponents that today's mediating German theology in this doctrinal dispute approves of them, it is rather a testimony against them.

The [1884 volume contains a Foreword](#) written by Professor [R. Lange](#), which emphasizes the Scripture Principle over rational conclusions that go against the Analogy of Faith. In addition, Dr. Walther, under the heading “[A Report on a Development](#)”, castigates the gross distortions which both the history of the doctrinal controversy and the doctrine itself had received through an article in the Leipzig [General Evangelical-Lutheran Church News](#). The [anonymous](#) author of this slanderous article in the *Leipziger Kirchenzeitung*, [titled “aus Amerika” \[Dec. 14, 1883: p. 1175-1180\]](#) is not unjustly portrayed in *Lehre und Wehre* as the American [Jansen](#) [[Jansenism?](#)].

Finally, a listing of the individual writings of Dr. [Walther](#) concerning the Election of Grace controversy may follow:

In the Lutheran Concordia Publishing House of St. Louis there appeared:

a) [The Controversy Concerning Predestination](#), a small tract, contains simple advice for those who would like to know who is Lutheran and who is not in the present controversy concerning the doctrine of Predestination.

b) [The Doctrine of the Election of Grace in Question and Answer, Presented from the Eleventh Article of the Formula of Concord of the Evangelical Lutheran Church](#). With a preface and epilogue by C. F. W. Walther (59 pages);

c) [Illumination of the Stelhorn Treatise on the Election of Grace Controversy](#), from the same author (77 pages);

d) [Correction of the "examination" of Prof. Stelhorn](#), written by the same author (157 pages).

This writing contains a detailed, and for everyone instructive, refutation of the preceding Stelhorn writing. In the Preface, Dr. Walther proves that he would gladly, albeit at great sacrifice, have spared the dear Christian people the

public controversy about this doctrine, even from the beginning. But it had happened to him, as it had once happened to the theologians in Wittenberg, when the wild spirit [Samuel Huber](#) stood up against them and also accused them of Calvinism in the doctrine of the Election of Grace. — The intention that Dr. Walther had when he authored these writings is made clear in the following sentence, which can be found in [Volume 26, p. 329 of *Lehre und Wehre*](#):

“May the Lord have mercy on our precious American Lutheran Church, and help her that she, as she has done so far in all other points of doctrine, goes back to the doctrine and confession of the Church in the age of the Reformation, so also in the high article of the Election of Grace, which is so incomprehensible to reason, and in this way, here in this last land of God's visitation of grace with His Word, also learn more and more about the blessing with which God once so abundantly showered on our church 350 and 300 years ago.” *)

*) To the list of publications dealing with the election controversy also the following should be added:

The 21st, 22nd and 23rd [Synodical Report of the Western District of the Synod of Missouri, Ohio and Others States](#) of 1877, 1879 and 1880.

Furthermore: [The Proceedings of the General Pastoral Conference zn Chicago, Ill., from September 29 to October 5, 1880.](#)

Furthermore: [The Proceedings of the Second Pastoral Conference on the Doctrine of the Election of Grace, at Fort Wayne, Ind. on May 23 and 24, 1881.](#)

Chapter XIII. [^]

[The origin and legitimacy of the Saxon Evangelical Lutheran Free Church.](#) (410) [[Free Church forms 1871](#) (418)] — **The withdrawal of the faithful Lutheran East India missionaries from the service of the Leipzig Mission and its consequences.** [[Germany warns, but Leipzig missionaries leave for Missouri](#) (422); [Break with Leipzig Mission Society](#) (424); [Walther answers Leipzig claim that Luther tolerated Melancthon](#) (424-427);]. — **The position of the Missouri Synod as such in the Controversy on the Election of Grace.** (428) [[Schwan's 1881 address on Election](#) (428)] • [[1881 Synod: disputes, discusses, then adopts "13 Theses on Election"](#) (433); [Missouri's seminaries](#) (437)] — **The laying of the foundation stone (439) and consecration of the new seminary in St. Louis. The 19th Synodical convention (1884)** (458). ([H. C. Schwan address](#)) (459) — [Review and conclusion.](#) (465)

[↑] At the beginning of the last decade [1871], a sister synod of the German Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and other States was established in Germany, namely [the Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church in Saxony and other States](#). Although the bond of faith that links these Saxon Lutherans with the members of the North American Missouri Synod is so close that they are often shamefully accused of being Missourians, this Saxon separated Lutheran synod has nevertheless grown up quite independently in its native homeland. Here, too, solemn protest against the accusation which has often been made, as if the North American Missouri Synod had sought to undermine the German Lutheran state church from over here, to agitate for separation from it and for the formation of a German-Missouri Free Church. In many cases it is just the other way round. After all, the Saxon Lutherans who emigrated in 1838 never claimed that Saxon Lutheranism had emigrated with them; after Stephan's unmasking, they decidedly renounced his narrow-minded sectarianism, as is reported in chapter 2 of this book. The public declaration of the emigrated Saxon Lutherans was kindly received in their old homeland and published in Saxon newspapers (mainly in the *Pilgrims from Saxony* [[Pilger aus Sachsen](#)]). Thus, in the first decades of the existence of the

Missouri Synod, a bond of fraternal, intimate fellowship and assistance was formed between the emigrants and the Missouri Synod established by them and the Lutheran-minded people in their old Saxon homeland. The editors of the *Pilgrims from Saxony*, Pastors Meurer, Rühle, [Böttcher](#), brought their readers news and messages from the area of the Missouri Synod in America and called for active support of them. It should be especially emphasized here, however, that following an appeal by the sainted Pastor Wyneken in 1840, the [Dresden Association for Church Support of Germans in North America](#) was formed, which from that time on sent a number of Lutheran pastors to America. Even though this association was not established in the beginning in exclusive connection with the Missouri Synod, it later entered into full church fellowship with the Missouri Synod, just as most of the sendlings of the association later joined the Missouri Synod, some of whom became outstanding members and leaders of the Missouri Synod themselves, to which not only the aforementioned Pastor Wyneken belonged, but also the still living and venerable Pastor Sihler in Fort Wayne, one of the first and oldest sendlings of the Dresden association. Unfortunately, the activities of this association seemed to cool down more and more, but they still existed until the beginning of the 1860s, when (1861) a formal institution for the collection and training of ministerial students for North America was established in [Nassau](#) by Pastor Brunn at [Steeden](#), in close and exclusive connection with the Missouri Synod. Even now there was so little awareness of opposition to the Missouri Synod in Germany, so that Pastor Brunn's institution, when it first came into existence, was welcomed with joy and supported most eagerly in all German Lutheran churches, namely Saxony, Hanover, Mecklenburg, and Lauenburg. In particular, Pastor Brunn also met the then board of the Dresden Association for North America on several occasions during this time, and enjoyed the warmest brotherly love and hospitality of the [sainted bookseller Justus](#)

[Naumann in Dresden](#), Pastor [Siedel in Tharandt](#) and others, as well as the full promise of participation and support. But especially on his annual collection trips, which Pastor Brunn made in almost all German Lutheran regional churches in the interest of his institution, he found the friendliest welcome everywhere, and was a welcome guest and speaker at many mission festivals; his institution was mainly maintained for the first 10-15 years of its existence with gifts from the state church as well as with students. At that time there was so little talk of a break or conflict between the Missouri Synod and the German Lutheran state churches. Rather, the Missouri-minded Lutherans on both sides of the world's oceans hoped that pure Lutheran doctrine would again and again come to dominate in the German state churches and that a real renewal and reformation of the German state church would take place.

Unfortunately things nevertheless turned out differently and certainly had to come out differently. And what was the main reason for this? Certainly not in a possible sectarian spirit or in the one-sided partiality of the Missouri-minded Lutherans for separation and free-churchism. No, indeed not. The contrast between the latter and the German Lutheran state church rather arose quite naturally and from within by the fact that in the Missouri SynBrobstd in America, as well as in its faithful friends and closest fellow believers in Germany, the faithful adherence to pure Lutheran confessional doctrine with all its consequences had won and kept the rule, while the German Lutheran state churches in their ecclesiastical and theological development, which had begun so hopefully, did not reach its goal but came to a standstill, allowing the liberal spirit of the times, unionism and the errors of modern theology to remain within them. Enslaved by the secular state governments of our time, whereby a real return

of the Lutheran state church to the pure Lutheran Confession revealed itself more and more as impossible.

It should not be denied here what powerful strengthening and foundation, especially in recognition of pure Lutheran doctrines and the truly Lutheran church principles based on them, the Missouri Synod in America has provided for our entire time, and how much this has not only bound its closest friends in Germany to it with intimate bonds of love and faith, but has also promoted their ecclesiastical endeavors. In such close fellowship with the Missouri Synod, the well-known “Association of Lutherans” (“*Lutheranervereine*”) in Dresden and Planitz in Saxony came into being in the early 1860s, at first without any thought of separation from the state church, but only out of the desire for support in faithful Lutheran church knowledge and attitude. But in their eager ecclesiastical striving for progress it soon became clear to these associations that the Saxon State Church and most of the pastors were not keeping pace with them: in the associations mentioned above, they clearly and decidedly held fast to purely Lutheran doctrine; in the State Church, on the other hand, they remained divided in their doctrine, unclear, undecided and tolerated various false doctrines; those associations pushed for Lutheran church discipline, the elimination of unionism especially at the altar, the establishment of Lutheran and closed communion, but the Saxon state church could not do justice to all these demands and requests, which these associations repeatedly addressed to the Saxon church government. The Ministry of Worship in Dresden rejected the petitions in question. Thus it came to the separation from the Saxon state church and formed the two separated congregations in Dresden, Zwickau and Planitz, which felt compelled to call the now sainted pastor [Ruhland](#) from America to be their pastor, since no Saxon pastor had joined them nor been willing to join them in the separation. The Missouri Synod in America as well as Pastor Brunn in Nassau, who himself stood in the

closest connection with the Saxon Lutheran associations, were completely far from urging the latter to separate, but out of full conviction, founded on the Word of God, they had to welcome the Saxon separation as truly Lutheran and confessional with joy, and so support and promote it to the best of their ability.

This is not the place to discuss in more detail today's German national or rather state church and the reasons for or against separation, which has happened in many other places. In order to be able to judge the position of the Missouri Synod, which it has currently taken on the same, we can only briefly mention the testimony it gave on the occasion of its jubilee celebration in 1872: “We believe that many dear Lutherans, many excellent men, are in Germany, but the organizations are no longer Lutheran; the Lutherans are in the midst of corrupt fellowships. We maintain that there is no longer a Lutheran Church in Germany as there was in the time of Luther and John Gerard, when the whole Bible was seriously considered to be the Word of God and the Concordia was considered to be the pure, clear and true exposition of the Word of God, where as soon as a preacher who deviated on one point from the Word of God and from the confession was agitated, he was put on trial.” As proof of this, [p. 49](#) of the [15th Synodical Report \[1872 Missouri\]](#) is cited earlier: The worst of all is that those who claim to be at the head of the renewed Lutheran Church do not believe or teach the doctrines of that Church itself. As an example is given in the same place: [Dr. Kahnis](#), who teaches in the Arian way that the Son of God is inferior to and subordinate to the Father, thus denying the apparently admitted divinity of Christ, who further attributes to the natural, unconverted man a free will even in spiritual matters etc. Also [Dr. Luthardt](#), although a learned man and one who is highly respected as editor of the [Allgemeine Evangelisch-lutherische Kirchenzeitung \(General Evangelical-Lutheran Church Newspaper\)](#), teaches completely in the spirit of the modern Lutheran theology that wants to be Lutheran: He does not believe that in conversion man is *pure*

passive in behavior, i.e. that he is only the object to be converted, but not the one who brings it about. The fact that man cannot do anything about it is considered an abomination by modern theology. (Also the Iowa Synod's vocal leader G. Fritschel, who wants to introduce the modern German theology here as it already came out during the Iowa Colloquy, puts in the [Brobst's Monatsheften](#) the statement: "Whether man becomes saved or is lost, that is in the last resort based on man's free decision for or against grace." Whereas Dr. Walther, in [Lehre und Wehre, of 1872, p. 193 ff.](#), wrote the important essay: "Is it really Lutheran doctrine that the salvation of man is based in the last analysis on man's free decision for or against grace?") Although Scripture clearly states: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them." [1 Cor. 2:14], they admit that this is what it says, but it is foolishness to them that the decision should not rest with man. — It is also almost universally accepted among these so-called orthodox theologians of Germany that the Lutheran doctrine of inspiration can no longer be believed. The professors without exception say: Not every word in the canonical writings of the Bible was inspired by the Holy Spirit; and because we still believe this, they laugh at us as ignorant people who are behind the times, even though the Savior says so clearly: "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God", Matt. 4:4. Add to this 1 Cor. 2:13: "the words which... the Holy Ghost teacheth". That Word, of which Luther says: "It stands firm like a wall which no one can overturn, no matter how intelligent he may be", this they have left behind. †)

†) Dr. Fred Kramer's note: According to the German Hymnal prepared by Dr. Walther and used in the German services in the Missouri Synod throughout its history the quotation is not from Luther but from the hymn "Herr Jesu Christ, du hast bereit" by Samuel Kinner or Koerner, No. 197, stanza 4. [[Walther's German Hymnal #197, stanza 3; TLH #306](#), "Lord Jesus Christ, Thou hast prepared"]

No one believes what the old [Brenz](#) says anymore, that if Paul has interpreted a passage of the Old Testament, he who pretends that this is not the interpretation of the Holy Spirit must be cursed. *)

*) It should be recalled here that the address of the Breslau High Church Consistory, published on June 15, 1884, among other things states:

But it is certain that where one no longer has the doctrine of Inspiration, there can no longer be talk of a purely Lutheran church, because the foundation for it is missing.

Following the above words taken from the synodical proceedings of the year 1872, a few sentences from [Dr. Walther's synodical address of the year 1874](#) are attached here [[BTL translation](#); [Baseley translation here](#)]:

“Over in the country of the foundation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, this church is manifestly approaching its dissolution more and more. After the unbelief that had already penetrated it at the end of the last century had already almost left it in the dust of death, it experienced a gracious visitation and awakening, but the Church of the Reformation has not risen again. — For what has happened? —

“Instead of returning to the faith ‘which was once delivered unto the saints’ [[Jude 1:3](#)], to the faith of the Apostolic Church, as Luther once did, it is precisely those who want to be considered pillars of the Church who have made science, further education, progress, perfection their watchword.

“Instead of preserving with holy faithfulness the precious heritage of pure doctrines and knowledge, which our fathers fought for in hot battles and temptations and left to us, their children, while Christianity as a whole is being defended with great learning, all individual doctrines of Christianity are now in the case of the one, now of another, in incomprehensible blindness treated as not yet finally answered questions [[or ‘Open Questions’](#)],

“The falsely famous art that the sainted [Scheibel](#) called the transformation of Christianity into innermost paganism is now once more being practiced at German universities, and the states as well as the state churches cannot ward off the evil When a people which had been graced by God as has the German people falls for the second time into the mire of rationalism — without permitting itself to be raised again by divine grace to the height and power of faith of the time of the Reformation — and this now, at a time of generally and internationally advanced human arrogance that has penetrated into the lowest circles, so this is more dangerous than the first time, and it can happen to them as it happened to Jerusalem.”

made dubious and shaky, if they are not downright rejected, and thus themselves overturn what they have built. Under the broad shield of a so-called believing science, he who is supposed to be the servant of the Word (Luke 1:2) and wants to be called such, is now allowed to present himself as the lord and judge of the Word, to lead even the apostles and prophets to school, while those who assigned to scholarship, as the captured ‘riches of the Gentiles’ (Is. 61:6), to serve in the sanctuary of God instead of ruling, are branded as narrow-minded despisers of science. Now it is therefore even the so-called believers of whom David’s lament is valid: ‘The foundations are destroyed’ Psalm 11:3 — — Instead of simply preaching repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, Acts 20:21, to both the learned and the unlearned, to both high and low, in an apostolic way, one is altering and mutilating the Gospel in order to lead the apostate generation back to the Gospel! — they take away the sting of the Word to bring back to life a generation that has become full and died twice! — Christianity is reduced to general and undefined religious principles and moods of the heart, in order to save it for a whole people who have long since in a conscious decision turned their backs on it.

“Instead of recognizing that a people who in their leading voices have fallen into disbelief, laughing at all hope of a hereafter and seeking their heaven only on earth, far from giving themselves over to the maternal education of the Church, rather reverse the relationship now and want only the church to submit to its majority of votes; instead of therefore separating from those who no longer want to be subject to Christ and His Word, indeed, loudly proclaim: ‘We do not want this one to rule over us’, ‘Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us!’ [Ps. 2:3] instead of, as the apostle commands, ‘purifying oneself of such people’ — the same people are kept in the church by all means still available, a

ballast which must necessarily pull the ship of the church into the abyss. — Instead of rallying in closed ranks around the old banner of the Confession of the orthodox church, and holding fast and defending it with confidence of faith, as did our fathers resting in God, all sorts of ambiguous formulas of commitment to this confession have been devised in order to reconcile even those who have long since left the foundation of it, to soothe their consciences and to give them space and authority in our church! Orthodox believers and manifest unbelievers, in short, friend and foe, now peacefully and fraternally share the pulpit, altar and pasture of the flock of Jesus Christ, sit together in synods, deliberate there together on the good of the Church and, in order not to endanger external peace, making ever new concessions to one another....” (See C. F. W. Walther's *Lutherische Brosamen* p. 545 [[From Baseley translation *Our Master's Table*, p. 255-256](#)]).

[↑] Just as this synodical address describes, the year 1871 was the year in which things began to happen in the Kingdom of Saxony. In May of that year a so-called State Synod was held in Saxony for the first time, and after many a pious wish had been expressed there (which was finally subject to the free approval of the Royal Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs and Public Instruction), the so-called faithful and positive had to make such concessions that the oath on the symbolic books, which had rightly existed until then, was abolished and a vow was introduced for it, which even the worst rationalist could take. The unbelievers in Saxony rejoiced over this. But those who wanted in earnest to be Lutherans now realized that a time of decision had come. While the Saxon state church had now officially issued its confessional character, a number of Lutherans left the state church, as already mentioned, and the members of the above-mentioned “Lutheran Association” [[p. 414](#)] now became the stock of the Lutheran congregations, which now form the [Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Saxony and Other States](#). The first pastor called by the separated Lutheran

congregations in Dresden and Planitz was [Fr. Ruhland](#), until then the pastor in Pleasant Ridge, Ill. He was called from there to Saxony on Dr. Walther's recommendation. Since at that time it was believed in various quarters that Dr. Walther wanted to exercise an ecclesiastical act of governance in the German Free Churches, he declared already in the synod of St. Louis in 1872 that he had rendered this service of love to his Saxon co-religionists not as a synodical president but as a close friend, after repeated requests, which enabled them to constitute themselves as an independent Lutheran Free Church. Thus, in the face of the slanders that are widely spread and generally believed as if the “Missourians” had “invaded” Germany, it is to be noticed that the Evangelical Lutheran congregations which were created by separation, and are independent of the state, called in their freedom an orthodox pastor such as they could not find in Germany, from America, making use of the counsel of Dr. Walther, and had thereby demonstrated that, fully conscious of their rights a royal priests, they had nevertheless wanted to accord the holy ministry, where they saw that it was being rightly administered, its due honor and co-operation in exercising their right of calling. After a year, Pastor Ruhland found a brother in Pastor E. O. [Lenk](#) *), who had left the Saxon state church, who, while Ruhland took over the Planitz congregation, worked in the Dresden congregation until he was later called to America. From Saxony, Pastor Ruhland came into even closer contact with the separated Lutheran Pastor Fr. [Brunn](#) in Steeden, who had served the Missouri Synod faithfully, and Pastor [Hein](#) in Wiesbaden. ***) Since Brunn's physical strength weakened,

*) Cf. Lenk, [*Appeal to all Christians of the Saxon State Church*](#). Dresden 1872.

**) Pastor Hein joined the small synod at the beginning, which he helped to found, but he took the side of our opponents in the Election of Grace controversy that broke out later and fell away from the synod.

C. [Eikmeier](#) took over the ministry at the Steeden congregation. In addition to the latter, the following pastors were also appointed: G. [Stöckhardt](#) in Planitz, C. [Schneider](#) in Frankenberg, H. [Stallmann](#) in Dresden (now in Mendorf — Kleinlinden), P. [Kern](#) in [Chemnitz](#), W. [Hübener](#) in Dresden, W. [Meyer](#) in Crimmitschau, and C. [Hempfung](#) in Mendorf near [Wetzlar](#) joined the small synod, whose first president was F. Ruhland. Since his death (1879) Pastor O. Willkomm, who is in Planitz, has been administering the presidency. Soon after it was constituted, this synod founded its own organ, entitled [The Evangelical Lutheran Free Church](#), a church newspaper, which can also be obtained from the Lutheran Concordia Publishing House in St. Louis, and which deserves an even wider circulation than it has achieved so far. Particularly valuable are the proceedings of the fifth annual convention of this synod in 1881, held in Dresden in connection with the Election of Grace controversy, which had as their subject the doctrine of free will and conversion. The same are printed in Zwickau in Saxony and are available, together with the other writings of the Saxon Free Church, to purchase from Heinrich J. Naumann in Dresden.

It is still clear at all times that the separated Lutheran Church, wherever it has always come to light in Germany, is a great blessing for its surroundings, both ecclesiastically and in civic affairs. Also the now immortalized editor of the [Freimund](#) for many years, the Bavarian Pastor [Wucherer](#), wrote in 1875: “The separation is the watchful conscience for the state church”; if he admittedly adds that this (the state church) is the cement for the separated, it would be sad for the existence of the separated church, if this latter opinion were correct. Meanwhile, the Saxon Lutheran Free Church must apparently have a quite different cement to hold it together, otherwise its existence would have been lost long ago. The bond which holds this Free Church together is the unanimous confession to which it adheres on the basis of the divine Word in the unity of the Spirit. This

has been shown in the many hostilities, which she has not lacked either. After, for example, Pastor G. [Stoeckhardt](#) in Niederplanitz had not only left the state church where he was originally supposed to stand up against the separated Lutheran Pastor Ruhland, but had also given testimony against today's state church in the [The Evangelical Lutheran Free Church](#), he was not only prosecuted in court, but also sentenced to eight months in prison in his absence, after he had already left Germany following a call to Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church in St Louis. On the part of the state church professors, the Free Church has found a bitter opponent in the editor of the [Allgemeine Evangelisch-lutherische Kirchenzeitung](#) [*General Evangelical-Lutheran Church Newspaper*], the above-mentioned Dr. Luthardt, who is also Vice President of the Leipzig Mission Society. It is certain that the church newspaper mentioned above is not a mere local newspaper, but the main organ of the state churches calling themselves Lutheran. Since today's state churches have become a playground for the most varied spirits, this Leipzig church newspaper must also “do justice” to these different directions, as one can already read in the prospectus of this newspaper. It is indeed very nicely interwoven with “as far as they move on the common ground of the Lutheran Confession and submit to the standard of this Confession”, but of course one reserves for oneself in every respect free research and free scholarship and the necessary freedom for the further education of Christianity, where else would be the justification of Luthardt's Chiliasm and synergism, or the right of the trend of Kahnis to Arianism, or the trend of Schleiermacher, von Hofmann, etc. Only one direction is forbidden and frowned upon, that is the path taken by the Missouri Synod, which has remained faithful to the Lutheran Reformation, which admittedly does not follow the wishes of the modern, newer German theologians, but with the greatest possible faithfulness follows the opposite, urgent request of the Apostle Paul, who in 1 Cor. 1:10-12

writes: “I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, ... but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” The pastor Brauer, standing in the Mecklenburg State Church, gives this testimony in Dargun of the Missouri Synod in the [Mecklenburg Kirchen- und Zeitblatt](#) of September 1876, where he laments that the dull shadows of the state churches no longer allow the purifying breeze of serious doctrinal discipline. The erroneous opinion of Luthardt, as if the church as such had to allow itself to be given contradictory directions in its midst (that order demands this!), Pastor Brauer counters with the assertion that precisely because the Church is not a (philosophical) school, but has a divine, salvation-working truth that is revealed from heaven, a truth that she has completely, on the preservation of which life and salvation depend, she must not tolerate that even in the most important doctrines of salvation the one teaches yes and the other no. He appeals to St. Paul's word: “For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.” [[Acts 20:27](#)] It is a corrupting fraud of freedom, it is Chiliastic dreams of the flesh, to think that the Church, “the pillar and ground of the truth” [[1 Tim. 3:15](#)] of all truth of all time, is developing like the growing and passing things of this world from immaturity to maturity. (See the relevant reprint in [Lehre und Wehre, 1876, p. 373](#)).

[↑] In 1875, two articles appeared in the Leipzig [Allgemeine evang.-lutherische Kirchenzeitung](#) in which, in order to prevent the spread of separation in Saxony, all Lutheran Christians were warned of the Missouri Synod as being harsh people who condemned anyone who did not acknowledge every letter of the theories put forward by Professor Walther, in particular the so-called doctrine of transference and the doctrine that the Pope was the Antichrist. Already in chapter X of this book the most important points concerning these two matters are mentioned; Luthardt wisely refrains from the equally important testimony against

today's synergism and chiliasm. While the testimony of the Missouri Synod against the wrong direction of the modern university theology bore a blessed fruit back and forth, so that also in the area of the Leipzig Mission individual missionaries had been awakened to the right Lutheran insight, the above-mentioned articles, in which the gauntlet was thrown down to the Missouri Synod, had a different effect than one had thought in Leipzig. The missionaries A. [Grubert](#), F. [Zucker](#), [C. M. Zorn](#) and O. [Willkomm](#) *) felt compelled in their conscience to give public testimony and accordingly sent a “[Declaration](#)” to Pastor [Brunn](#) in Steeden for suitable publication. The same was published not only in the magazine [Evang.-luth. Kirche und Mission](#), edited by Pastor Brunn, but also as a separate printing in the publishing house of Joh. Herrmann in Zwickau, and almost without exception the German circles connected with the Leipzig Mission judged the mentioned missionaries to be in danger. Although in this declaration there was not a single mention of the Mission, because what Pastor Brunn had said about the syncretistic state of the Leipzig Mission could not be blamed on the missionaries concerned, this action was nevertheless considered unforgivable. It became clear that the missionaries had acted rightly by taking steps to liberate the Leipzig Mission from the syncretism in which it lay, or, if this were not possible, at least to free themselves from this sin, according to 1 Timothy 5:22. The latter case occurred. The Director of Missions [Hardeland](#) himself rushed to the missionaries in the East Indies and, before any further negotiations, demanded that they should express their regret about the publication of the above-mentioned declaration. Since they could not do this for reasons of conscience,

*) The fifth, E. Schäffer, who was originally involved, resigned afterwards.

they had to leave the service of the Leipzig Mission.

[↑] Although St. Louis did not know anything about these events in the East Indies, but had only learned that the missionaries had taken steps to eliminate the syncretism prevailing in the Leipzig Mission, it was nevertheless possible to foresee what was in store for them. While they had been abandoned by the Missionary Society, Prof. Walther, in agreement with the St. Louis Conference, offered the missionaries in question the necessary funds, which they needed to travel from East India to Germany and from Germany to North America. The money was sent to them at their request after the bond with Leipzig had already been severed. Although it was natural that the Missourians took care of their fellow witnesses, some were not ashamed to make such an act a special reproach to Prof. Walther. He was even publicly accused of having acted arbitrarily in this matter; but in the end, all districts of the Missouri Synod confirmed everything that the men of St. Louis, particularly Prof. Walther, who was then the general president, had done and expended in this matter. At the same time, the Missouri Synod felt compelled, painful as it was, to sever the ties with Leipzig and to withdraw the support still given to the Leipzig Mission, since there was no longer any hope that the Mission would dismiss the syncretism in its midst. *)

[↑] In the course of these events it turned out that even those circles in Germany, whose confessional standpoint was still the best one could do, could not tolerate the testimony against the evils which were tolerated among them, and wanted little to think of doing away with these evils,

*) About the course of events in the whole matter reported in detail: C. M. Zorn, [*Urgent Justification of the Resignation of the Missionaries F. Zucker, etc. from the Leipzig Mission.*](#) St. Louis, Mo. Dresden, Heinrich J. Naumann.

that they rather sought to defend these sad conditions. Some particularly liked to appeal to Luther's supposed toleration of the errors of Melanchthon and refers to them as if one could not be more orthodox than Luther once was. While also Hardeland had attacked the position of those missionaries in East India with this pretence, Prof. Walther took this as a reason to write the important article: “[The ‘Toleration’ of Melanchthon on the part of Luther](#)” in the [November](#) and [December issues 1876 of *Lehre und Wehre*](#). [[German text here](#)]— Since Director Hardeland wanted to reassure the missionaries by pretending that a man had to be taken for [Lutheran](#) for so long, that is, not to separate from him when he professed to be Lutheran, and since he also thought that Luther had followed precisely this principle toward the Melanchthon, Dr. Walther answered this question at the beginning of his essay: “If Melanchthon had really already become apparent in Luther's time as a stiff-necked false teacher, and if Luther had really let him be quietly allowed to do so during this time, one would have to admit, however, that those Lutherans who do not want to maintain fellowship with false teachers appearing in our church do not act in Luther's sense, at least not according to Luther's example. Except the matter, thank God, is quite different. Dr. Walther proves first of all that Melanchthon did not deviate from Luther's doctrine in any article until 1535, in which year doubts about the doctrines of the Holy Sacrament may have arisen in his heart, that he signed not only the [Wittenberg Articles in 1536](#), but also afterwards the [Smalcald Articles](#), which leave nothing to be desired in terms of decisiveness, that Melanchthon later, moreover, only secretly spoke out his departure from Luther's doctrines toward fellow-minded people, but disguised it from Luther as far as possible, so that Luther still behaved unsuspectingly toward him, while Melanchthon already carried himself with an evil conscience, and suspected that Luther might get angry with him. Furthermore Dr. Walther proves from several

examples that Luther did not simply tolerate Melanchthon, but rebuked and threatened him himself, if it once became obvious to him despite Melanchthon's constant playing [hide-and-seek](#), or if even the strongest suspicion was aroused in him that Melanchthon was falsifying the doctrine. After Dr. Walther closes this detailed report, taken from the sources, with the story which comes from the mouth of [\[George\] Major](#), that Luther not only wrote down the words in Latin at the entrance of his study room: “Our professors are to be examined on the Lord's Supper,” but also, before he set out on his last journey to Eisleben, told Major, when questioned, “What you read and what the words are, so it is the opinion; and when you return home, and I too, an examination will have to be conducted,” and so on, he finally summarizes the result as follows. [p. 372, 1876](#): “Finally, we ask: Can those who cultivate fellowship in the church with notorious false teachers, when these profess to the doctrines of our church on the whole, rightly call upon the fact that Luther also tolerated a Melanchthon? — We answer: Impossible! It is true that if one goes a little deeper into the history of Melanchthon's behavior during the last ten years of Luther's life, the eye is presented with such a bleak picture of the former that one must ask oneself with astonishment how it was possible that there was no decisive break between the two men. ... How much more would we have preferred” so Dr. Walther continues in view of his preceding historical account, “to be able to help that only the memory of Melanchthon is kept alive from the time of his faithfulness and blessed activity, but that the memory of him in the time of his fall would rather be erased and buried forever! May those who, instead of strengthening themselves in Melanchthon who once faithfully supported his teacher Luther, seek support for their syncretism in Melanchthon who was secretly engaging in machinations against Luther, while publicly confessing loyalty to him and his doctrine,

they are responsible for forcing faithful disciples of Luther to draw to light what they would like to see covered up. ... To say that Luther tolerated Melanchthon as a false teacher revealed before him is against all historical, actual truth and a horrible blasphemy against Luther, the faithful confessor of pure truth until his death and unbending fighter against any falsification of the same. To say of a man, like Melanchthon, who had done and continued to do everything to make Luther believe that he agreed with him in doctrine; of a man who Luther ... had given a serious reproach, of a man who, as often as reproaches have been given to him, had yielded, of a man, who himself constantly complained in those days that he had to walk beside Luther as if under a threatening thunderstorm gathering over his head, who always feared that he might betray himself, that he would be called to account by Luther, and when Luther polemicized that it was himself being meant, and finally of a man who, even after Luther's death revealed to a [Carlowitz](#) what an unbearable, “almost disgraceful bondage” he had endured under Luther — to say of such a man that Luther had carried him as a manifestly false teacher — as an example for us “from the fundamental time of the Reformation” (as Hardeland said) would be downright ridiculous, if it were not so sad. But to ascribe to Luther, The Reformer, who was awakened and sealed by God, that though he boldly condemned all others who harbored Melanchthon's errors as false prophets, and therefore as ravening wolves, but in Melanchthon he had ‘tolerated’ and overlooked these same errors out of a special friendship, may God protect every Lutheran from this in grace; but to him who does this, may God grant sincere repentance.” [**end of long quote from Walther essay**]

As thorough as the historical evidence that Dr. Walther provides there concerning Melanchthon is, so serious and insistent is the above final application. Although the Leipzigers could not refute such articles, they were nevertheless from that time on always ready to open the columns of the [Allgemeine Kirchenzeitung](#) to the

opponents of the Missouri Synod, and when some years later the controversy on Election of Grace broke out in this country, the German university theologians were found on the side of those who thought that now they had found food on the table for them. But while in Germany it is customary to treat doctrinal disputes only as a dispute for students, Dr. Luthardt also encountered the strange fact that he, who was otherwise sympathetic to synergism, published an essay in the “Sprechsaal” section of his *[Zeitschrift für kirchliche Wissenschaft und kirchliches Leben](#)* (“*Journal for Church Science and Church Life*”; volume 1880, p. 204, installment IV) which in fact presents a Calvinist particularism. Neither Luther, nor [Tileman Hesshusius](#), nor any Missourian has ever denied the universal grace and love of God toward all people. But the above-mentioned Lutheran publication, together with Calvin, makes the statement that God wants everyone to be helped, and so on, to a few individuals who are to be found among all classes and estates. In view of this, one could rightly ask: Where do these people get the right to persecute on account of the doctrine of the Election of Grace those who are concerned only about the sole working of divine grace in those who are saved by faith?

[↑] The position of the Missouri Synod as such in the Controversy on the Election of Grace.

After the Election of Grace Controversy had already been disturbing the minds for two full years, the 18th convention of the General Synod of Missouri, Ohio and other States was opened on May 11, 1881 at Fort Wayne, Indiana. General President [H. C. Schwan](#) who was elected at the conclusion of the previous General Synod three years earlier, based his synodical address on the text: “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” [2 Cor. 12:9] — Let the following be taken from it:

[↑] “In response to the prayer of Paul three times, the Lord said: ‘My

grace is sufficient for thee!” That is: You have my mercy, Paul. You shall keep it too. That's enough. So let it be sufficient for you. My grace will give you what you need: strength to fight, patience to carry, good courage in sadness. Paul believed the words. He let is suffice for him. ... So he was of good courage in weakness, shame and need. — This word also has something to say to us, especially in the present time.

We are not worthy of extraordinary revelations. We are not chosen instruments, as a Paul was. But the Lord Himself has revealed His Gospel to us; He has called us to be His instruments, has blessed our work above all we ask and understand, has lifted us out of the dust, given us space, made us high and great. So that we do not exalt ourselves, as we would certainly have done, He has also seen to it that we are not lacking a thorn in the flesh and a messenger of Satan. And especially in the most recent time blows have struck us as we never had to suffer them before, because they came from a quarter from which we should certainly not have expected them. Not the old enemies, ... but those who stood with us in sacred brotherly bonds, who are the flesh of our flesh and the bone of our bone, have not only accused us of false doctrine, but have also branded us as apostates before the whole of Christendom, and have even sounded the alarm against us as falsifiers of the eternal Gospel.

Then many godly hearts, as once St. Paul sighed and cried out to the Lord, and still cry out day and night, that at least this bitter cup may pass away. What now? Have they perhaps cried in vain? Have we gone unheard? Satan and his own are certainly already rejoicing: at last these men must fall to the ground, who stir up the world; and when they lie down, they shall never rise again! But they are mistaken. The time will come when they will stop. This thorn may penetrate even deeper and make the breach even larger.

The unexpected blows of the fist to the neck may come even more. But we are heard! Because of the Word: ‘My grace is sufficient for thee’, we also have the Word. — — All the children of God among us, as they are certain that they themselves have done nothing to help themselves, so are they also certain that the Lord has truly opened their hearts to rejoice in His grace, to take comfort and put all their hope in it. Just as they know that if they had been left alone they would have fallen away long ago, that it is the Lord alone who has received them up to now, so divinely are they also certain that He will hold on to them until the end, and will keep their portion until the Last Day. Therefore, we have His grace. We are certain of it.

But we have not forfeited this grace through the present struggle. We have a clear conscience. We know, and He also knows, that the article of eternal Election was not brought into the plan out of arrogance, but out of necessity, for His glory, for certain comfort of His own. After all, the Election of Grace has been widely denied or set aside in modern Christianity, or made dependent on all sorts of things in the elect, which God should have looked at and foreknown, be it their own decision, or their acceptance, or at least their unwillingness to resist the gift of faith. The one who has eyes must have seen how the glory of God was thereby darkened and the children of God were deprived of the certainty of comfort. And whoever saw this was not allowed to remain silent. He had to witness and praise the unconditional nature of grace, in which the supreme glory of our God shines; he had to testify and praise the certainty of this grace, on which all the consolation of broken hearts depends, but on the other hand, everything that wants to rise up against it, wherever it is to be found, in us or in others, consciously or unconsciously, and however it may be concealed, adorned and made up, had to be knocked down and trampled into the dust. That had to happen and that and nothing else

was what we wanted when we put the article of the Election of Grace on the candlestick again. We know that, the Lord knows that!

... We are certain that we have not lost His grace through this controversy either. Therefore, His word is now also valid for us: My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. But what does this word tell us in our present struggle? It calls to us: Do not be afraid! The mountains shall depart, and the hills shall fall; but my grace shall not depart from thee, and the covenant of my peace shall not fall. Remain only with me and the certain word of my grace, and you shall certainly abide!

If you are not able to grasp how I once chose you, since you were in the same, even greater guilt than others, let it be sufficient for you that you now certainly have my grace, and that this grace is eternal, as I myself am...

If others seek to ponder, explain, and make acceptable to reason the mystery of Election, be content that it is an Election of Grace and that reason knows nothing of grace.

If others do not wish to hear of a election which does not rhyme with their concepts of justice and equity, and they therefore make a judicial decision in advance, let it remain an Election of Grace. My (God's) justice will remain pure when it is judged.

If others think that my election must necessarily have seen something in those to be chosen that makes them pleasant or at least acceptable, be content and be glad that I alone saw my mercy and merit. Otherwise you would certainly not have been chosen.

If others say, I have at least had to look at your faith: so be content that your faith is not your work, but mine – I determined to work that in you, just as I chose you.

If they cannot understand how to be sure of their election, since one should be assured of the present state of grace but not of his perseverance, let it be sufficient that both of these are made sure by my calling Word and that faith in this Word is also a miracle of my grace.....

Feeling sorry for so many sincere hearts that are on your enemies' side: What can be said? Entrust them to my mercy. I will let the sincere succeed. — To sum up, the Lord is calling us with these words: Hold fast to what my Word tells you, that Election is by grace alone for my sake, that only free grace is truly grace and certain grace, and that only certain grace can comfort. Remain with it, and keep it in your own chamber; confess it confidently before the world, and preach it from the housetops, and fear not. I am with you. Do not retreat, for I am your God. I strengthen you, I also help you, I receive you through the right hand of my righteousness.

This, this is what the Word of the Lord tells us in this fight. Are you saying we shouldn't trust that Word? Would we have cause to? He has mercifully redeemed us from six tribulations, should an evil move us in this seventh one? He has saved us through many a struggle, and through it He has blessed us, should He want to leave us in this last one, if we stand by him? Are there not already traces of His grace and help? The storm for which the alarm was sounded did not overthrow us, the wild waters that rushed against us did not drag us along. On the contrary, they had to show us that in this struggle we are also standing safe on the rock that the wind and waves break against. Yes, it almost looks as if the order had already gone out: So far, and no farther! For not a few of those who turned their backs on us in the first horror are already turning back to us. If we have had to painfully

experience the separating power of truth, we have certainly been allowed to taste the sweet unifying power of it..... As often as something in us wants to exalt itself, may the thorn and the messenger of Satan hold it down, as often we are tried to be timid, may this Word of the Lord always lift us up: My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Amen.” [end of Schwan’s address]

[↑] After the presidential address had been made, the Synod proceeded to the discussions concerning the fierce dispute that had broken out within the Synodical Conference over the doctrine of the Election of Grace. It is a sad fact that even in the midst of the Missouri Synod, members belonging to the Synod are fighting each other. “To see such a thing in our midst (the Missouri Lutherans) is unusual,” It is high time to control and prevent the destruction caused in our midst by the spreading of doctrines to the contrary. “Our doctrine is none other than that of Scripture and our dear Lutheran Church at the time of the Reformation and the Formula of Concord. It is the doctrine of our Church that we have ever professed and continue to profess without reservation. It is true that even our opponents have attempted to base their doctrine on Article 11 of the Formula of Concord, but with what right they have done this anyone who knows can see that our opponents not only recognize as such the two sole causes of Election, namely God's mercy and Christ's merit, as exclusively invoked by the Formula of Concord, but that they also add a third cause, namely, persevering faith. — Now the one who has made these and other doctrines that go against God and our Confession his own and spreads them can no longer go hand in hand with us. We cannot and must not tolerate that even pastors within our

synod communion not only hide but also openly point to us as Calvinist seducers of souls. An end must be put to this state of affairs.....” We therefore have the duty, for many reasons, to make known to the Church and to the world without hesitation: this and only this teaching is the teaching of the Synod; we do not tolerate any other doctrine among ourselves. The general mood in our midst also urges us to decide. Already at the Pastoral Conference held in Chicago in the autumn of 1880, all those present, with the exception of a few, declared themselves convinced that only the doctrine presented and defended in our publications was in conformity with Scripture and Confession, and that therefore it alone should be valid among us. Those who raise the accusation of crypto-Calvinism against us should have long ago declared their withdrawal from the associations of our Synod. We do not want any kind of unionism. — — From this it was also explained that the fact that the Synod is now taking a firm stand on this doctrine, and that a vote is needed, is not connected with the opinion that it should first be decided by a vote among us which doctrine is right and which is wrong — which has long since been established from God's Word, and in accordance with it from our confessions. Rather, such a vote should only be our confession of right and pure doctrine, and make known to us who belongs to us and who does not. At the same time, it will also become clear which part of the synodical house must leave. Pure doctrine is better for us than the entire property of the Synod, and our faith is more dear to us than anything on earth. — After all the Synodical Presidents had been commissioned to draw up some contrasting Theses on the doctrine of the Election of Grace and to submit them to the Synod for further discussions, they reported the following day through their chairman that they could not draft new statements on the doctrine of Scripture and the Confession of the Election of Grace and considered it best not to provide anything of their own, but rather

to recommend to the Synod that it should make those 13 Theses which are listed in [Nos. 2-9 of Vol. 36 of *Der Lutheraner*](#) be made an expression of their confession in the doctrine of the Election of Grace. These “Theses” contain the pure doctrine of the divine Word on the Election of Grace, as it has found expression in the Confession of our church. Briefly and succinctly, these summarize everything that our Synod teaches on the Election of Grace. (See the 13 Theses in the previous chapter, [p. 386](#).) The 13 Theses were then read out, and to those who feared that many members of the Synod might still want to associate a hidden meaning with them, it was expressly explained: “We do not associate with the 13 Theses at hand any other meaning than that which the wording of these Theses themselves give. The one who in reality takes these Theses as they are, is one with us in faith. We confess that in these Theses the sum total of all that we believe with regard to the eternal election of God is laid down. With this we say at the same time that we do not confess anything that is wrong with these Theses, and this is also to be found in our own publications. We know of no secret or hidden meaning in these Theses. We believe, teach and confess only what the Theses say according to their explicit wording. And this is because they contain the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures and, in accordance with them, the doctrines of our Confession. It is certainly true that we have also tolerated among us the expressions of later teachers of our church; we have therefore never declared them to be false teachers. But we have never concealed from ourselves the fact that we should rather drop the expressions of the later dogmatists, the so-called second form of teaching, and have now also dropped it, forced by painful experiences. — Anyone who reads these 13 Theses without bias must admit that they are true and nothing but the truth. This applies not only to the first Theses, but also to the latter, which contain the main part of everything that forms the concept of Election,

namely, that the eternal election of God is a cause of our salvation and everything that creates, works, helps and promotes it; thus, it is a cause of everything that serves an elect person here on earth for the final purpose of his unfailingly attaining salvation. —

After the Synod had answered yes to the question whether it was ready to vote on all sides, the question was put to the Synod:

Does the Synod recognize the doctrine of the Election of Grace, as presented in our publications, as far as it is summarized in the 13 Theses read aloud, as the doctrine of Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confession?

This question was answered by a vast majority with a joyful Yes! Only a very tiny minority (of about six votes) answered with No!

After the Synod had settled the doctrinal controversy within its area, it was emphasized that these 13 Theses were well known in the congregations and had been read many times. The members of the Synod who gathered on behalf of all the synodical congregations represent the entire synod. It is only fraud and deception if the small minority wants to pretend that they are the true Missouri Synod, but the other members as a whole are the new Missourians who are off course. After the Synod as such had made its confession, it was now up to the district president to act with the individual opponents, who now show themselves to be open enemies. As already reported in the previous section, the doctrine was again discussed in a general pastoral conference, which was held after the conclusion of this general synod; two of the previous opponents declared there that they were convinced that they were better off by agreeing with the doctrine of the Synod. Shortly before the opening of this Synod, Prof. Stellhorn had accepted a call as professor in Columbus, Ohio, and under his leadership a number of pastors

left the Missouri Synod and went over to the Ohio Synod and formed the Northwestern District of the Ohio Synod. (See [Chapter XI](#), p. 343.)

The Synodical Conference, which met in Chicago in October 1882 and consisted of representatives of the Missouri, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Norwegian Synods, adopted both the Declaration of the Wisconsin and Minnesota Synods, as well as the 13 Theses of the Missouri Synod as a Scriptural and symbolic confession of the doctrine of the Election of Grace, and the firm and measured attitude shown by the representatives of this doctrine both at the synodical assemblies and in their publications proved a blessing to many.

Inexperienced people could, in view of the Election of Grace Controversy [[or Predestinarian Controversy](#)], embrace the popular opinion in Germany that it is better to devote one's time and energy to missions and such good works! Even though the Missouri Lutherans have recently been portrayed in the [Allgemeine Evangelisch-lutherische Kirchenzeitung](#) as disturbers of the peace that hold back many a good thing, it is nevertheless certain that nobody can be diligent in a godly life who does not adhere with all seriousness to the pure teaching of the divine Word. Only those who know the pure Word of God and have experienced its saving power in their own hearts will be willing to participate in the building of the kingdom of God and to place themselves at the service of the Lord Jesus without compulsion. Such a cordial willingness was shown at the very same general Synod at which the Election of Grace Controversy was brought to a close by an almost unanimous confession. According to a passage in the report on the theological seminaries of the Missouri Synod "One might well think, in view of the fact that we are notorious by those who pretend to be genuinely Lutheran and quite Missouri, as people who, in the doctrine of the Election of Grace, 'have become the old archenemies of pure Lutheran doctrine, the Calvinists,' that our people would have gone astray from us. [[↑](#)] However, the call for help from many congregations became all the more urgent. Although 33 students graduated from the St. Louis Concordia Seminary at

the end of the 1880-1881 academic year, and a number of practical candidates were added each year, not half of the congregations that sought pastors were satisfied. This fact, too, contributed to the decision to undertake the new construction of a theological seminary, which had been discussed earlier. The old building erected 30 years ago in St. Louis had become dilapidated, and after careful examination of all the reasons, the lay delegates in particular insisted on the necessity of a new building, which was to be erected on the same site in St. Louis after demolition of the old seminary building. It was to have a building lot size of 250 x 340 feet, measure 225 feet long x 95 feet deep, have three stories high, contain over 60 rooms and dormitories, be equipped with an assembly hall, contain a library and reading room and 8 classrooms. According to this plan, which was approved by the Synod, the chosen construction committee went to work. Dr. Walther was commissioned to make an appeal to the congregations to support the cause of the seminary building and to have it published in the *Der Lutheraner*.

Now, when looking at the magnificent building, everyone should remember that this great work was undertaken when the Missourian pastors and congregations were still in the midst of the severe doctrinal struggle and could not yet say what far-reaching disturbances it would cause throughout the Synod's area. Just at that time Stelhorn's tracts and the diatribes of a certain Lauritzen, who joined the Iowans, were sent unsolicited and by the dozen to the pastors and the school teachers, through whom one hoped to be able to agitate. Even in the manner of a theater advertisement they were laid before the door of our church members. Within the Wisconsin Synod, a pastor in Oshkosh, who kept only a minority of his former parishioners on the side of the Synod, was quickly driven out of his parsonage through the agitation of a school teacher, and Messrs. F.A. Schmidt and Allwardt came specifically for the occasion, although the

president of the Wisconsin Synod had protested against their presence, lent their hand to this eviction, and Prof. F. A. Schmidt preached to this fanatical crowd after the rightful pastor had been driven out. There was a rebellion there like there was at Ephesus, Acts 19: the one cried out: We do not want a election of grace; the other: We do not want a kingdom of grace! *) — At such a time, no small amount of faith was needed to begin the costly new building, the cost of which was to be met entirely by voluntary donors from the congregations of the Missouri Synod. The Lord God gave courage and strength, the funds came in, and although the cost was originally estimated at only \$100,000 and the building required \$140,000 when the building was completed, due to various circumstances, yet even this large sum was already paid up except for \$21,000 when the following Delegate Synod gathered in St. Louis at the beginning of May 1884. The enemies were not allowed to succeed in even tearing the synod apart, which is why this seminary building stands also a testimony to the heartfelt unity that unites all parts of this great synod body. [↑] On October 1, 1882, the solemn laying of the foundation stone took place, and on September 9, 1883, shortly before Luther's 400th anniversary, the solemn inauguration of the Concordia Seminary Building took place. So the promise had been fulfilled anew for the Missouri Synod: Thy children shall make haste; thy destroyers and they that made thee waste shall go forth of thee! Is. 49:17. The address which Dr. Walther gave at the laying of the foundation stone reads as follows:

[↑] Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth!
Amen.

*) As soon as this atrocity was accomplished, Stelhorn hired an Ohio preacher who now serves this bunch in Oshkosh, Wisc. The 50 voting members, loyal to their Pastor Dowidat and to the Wisconsin Synod, immediately built a new church and school rooms, and their congregations are enjoying renewed growth.

Dear brothers and sisters in the Lord!

Honored guests!

[from [Der Lutheraner](#), vol. 38, No. 22, p. 169 ff]

Almost 33 years ago, on November 8, 1849, the foundation stone was laid for a building that would house a twofold nursery for future servants of the Lutheran Church in its narrow spaces. That building, seven months later, on June 11, 1850, happily completed with God's help and solemnly consecrated to the Lord, extended from time to time and serving His holy purpose for 32 years, has already disappeared from the face of the earth a few months ago. It was not consumed by flames of fire, nor has it been washed away by floods of water, nor have storm winds blown over it and brought it to the ground. It was we ourselves who broke it down to make room for a new, larger building on the old sanctuary. Unawakened longings for high things have moved us to do so. No, God Himself has called out to us through His blessing, just as Israel once did through the prophet Isaiah: "Enlarge the place of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out." (Is. 54:2) The old building could no longer hold the ever richer blessing of God that was streaming towards us. If we did not want to say to God in inexcusable satiety, "Stop, Father, with your blessing," or if we did not want to spill the blessing of our God that had flowed to us in filthy ingratitude, we had to procure a larger vessel to contain this blessing.

So we have gathered here today to publicly and solemnly lay the corner-stone into the foundation wall which will support the planned massive new building.

The act which we are about to perform is probably a very inconspicuous act. Three hammer blows in the name of the triune God, and the thing is done. But, my friends, this act is merely symbolic. Not the act itself, but what it means and what it is meant to remind us of, is therefore the important thing

that has gathered us around these walls today. Nor is it the simple stone that we wish to place in this foundation, which alone is to support the bold, heavenly building that is intended to support and protect it from collapse; the solemn laying of this stone is therefore only intended to make us aware of the invisible foundation of the spiritual building that the new structure is destined to serve.

And so it is, whereby I may now be allowed to linger for a few moments. —

My friends, God does not need for His works any other reason than Himself. What God builds, He builds alone on Himself, on His completely free will and on His unchanging eternal counsel. God's power and wisdom, God's goodness and grace, God's justice and truth are the eternally unbreakable pillars on which heaven and earth and everything that is in them rests alone. The pagan poets of the ancient pagan world, who were considered to be enthusiastic about God, may have childishly fabled about a giant Atlas, who was condemned by the gods to bear the immense burden of the vault of heaven; but what does the book of divine revelation say about this? In it, God Himself presents Job with the question: “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone?” (Job. 38:4-6) and Job had to confess: God “He hangs the earth upon nothing”, while the Book of All Books testifies in another place of the eternal Son of God: “He upholds the universe by the word of his power.” (Heb. 1:3) In short, God alone is the foundation that supports every work of which God alone is the builder.

It is different with all works of human hands. On the other hand, everything comes down to, beside the master craftsman, the foundation on which the building rests. May a man-made building be so high that its top, like the tower of Babel, reaches up to the sky; may it be so wide that, like Egypt's pyramids, it covers the area of an entire city; the material of it may be so precious that, like Solomon's

temple, it shines from inside and outside with gold, marble and precious stones; may it have been decorated by the greatest masters of building, painting and sculpture with their most beautiful works of art, so that it is, like once that temple of Diana at Ephesus, an object of admiration of all times; may finally a building by human hands be so strong that it seems to be able to defy all powers of destruction forever, like once Nebuchadnezzar's royal castle: if, above all, the foundation is not unshakable, above which the building rises, if, for example, the ground is quickly giving way to drifting sand or loose rubble, then no amount of height, no amount of width, no amount of preciousness of its material, no amount of jewellery will help, no matter how astonishing the massive strength of its masonry and rafters and its columns and buttresses — the first storm wind that blows over such a building shakes it to its depths, shakes it to pieces, lifts it from its foundations, and in a few moments transforms it into a desolate heap of rubble.

This same understanding also applies to every invisible, spiritual building of humans. If the reason for it is the ever-changing, yes, the ever-evolving and self-devouring wisdom of this world, or if the reason for it is a human coercive force that stands today and falls away tomorrow, or if the reason for it is the fleeting fog and dreams of human speculation and imagination, or if the reason for it is the human authority that is always subject to error, then such a spiritual edifice built on a perishable foundation is itself a work of perishability.

So then, my friends, you may justly ask: What is the foundation for the invisible spiritual edifice, of which the visible new building now to be erected is to become only the temporary scaffolding, only the enclosing shell? You ask justly: What, then, is the meaning of the stone which we want to insert today into this foundation wall as its capstone?

I answer to this: Our foundation stone means the one of which God already says in the prophecies of the prophet Isaiah: "Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: 'Whoever believes will not be in haste.'" (Isaiah 28:16) Our foundation-stone is He who once prophesied of Himself: "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt. 16:18) Our foundation-stone is He who once prophesied of Himself: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." (Matt. 24:35) Our foundation stone means the one of which the apostle of the Gentile nations writes to the Christians in Corinth: "No one can lay any other foundation except the one that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Our foundation-stone means the one of which the same Apostle speaks when he calls the Christians to Ephesus: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." In short, our foundation-stone means Christ, the eternal Son of God and Saviour of all sinners, and His Holy Word which alone saves.

Yes, my friends, Christ and His Word alone, that is the rock-solid foundation on which the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other States has stood unchallenged for more than 35 years now and still stands by God's grace. This is the synod which is erecting this new building through the free and rich gifts of love of many thousands of pious Christians who belong to it: this and no other should and will therefore also by God's grace be the foundation of the spiritual edifice on which work is to be done under the protective roof of this visible new building. "Christ and His Word Alone" — that is the unshakable foundation of the Concordia of 1580, that pure and glorious confession of our entire orthodox Evangelical Lutheran Church: this and no other shall and will therefore, also by God's grace, be the foundation of our institution, called "Concordia" after this confession. "Christ and His

Word Alone" was the diamond-like foundation of the great work of the Lutheran Church Reformation: this and no other shall and will therefore, also by God's grace, be the foundation of the faithful daughter of the Reformation, the foundation of this our theological seminary.

In the new Concordia, too, reason, as a gift of God, will not be despised, but will rather be held in high esteem and praised as a glorious light in the matters of this earthly life: But at the same time it will be testified that the fallen man's reason is blinded in spiritual and heavenly matters, that it knows nothing of the true God and of the way to this true God, yes, that the saving truth is only a foolishness and a stumbling block to it, and that it must therefore neither be a teacher and judge in matters of the divine counsel regarding salvation, nor brood over them and make deductions about them, but must give itself up in this foreign territory and remain silent. In the new Concordia, too, teachers and students will certainly humbly sit down at the feet of those sainted great teachers of the church who have unearthed invaluable treasures of divine wisdom and knowledge from the golden mine of the Holy Scriptures with unparalleled diligence and incorruptible faithfulness, and who have left them to us in their immortal writings. In the new Concordia, too, love and fidelity to the true visible Church of God on earth, to our dear Lutheran Zion, will at last be planted in the hearts of young theologians, but it will not be concealed from them that no doctrine is for truth because the Church teaches it, but rather that the Church must be recognized as the true Church only because she teaches the truth; that it is not the Church that sustains the Word, but the Word that sustains the Church.

Behold, my friends, not one false, borrowed banner

shall and will ever flutter above our new Concordia, which bears the inscription: “Christ and His Word Alone”, but on its deepest foundation, which bears everything, the watchword of our church should and will clearly and truly shine: “God's Word and Luther's Doctrine Pure Shall to Eternity Endure.” The mouth of the teacher must immediately, stricken by God, be silenced forever, whichever in our new Concordia dares to open itself against Christ's free grace and against His only true Word, and the hand of the teacher must immediately, overtaken by God's judgment, wither forever, which ever starts to take hold of the pen against Christ and His Word.

May the magnificently planned new building on rock-firm ground rise higher and higher from day to day, rising majestically and heavenly, be happily completed and, after a year's time, open its hospitable doors to us for a joyful entry and stand there until the distant future, a shining monument to the free grace of our God and the sacrificial love of many thousands of devout Christians even in these last times. But may the spiritual edifice, invisible to human eyes, which is cultivated in the wide, bright halls of this new building, grow, flourish, blossom, and spread its branches further and further, and bear a thousand-fold fruit for eternal life, a tree planted by God Himself along the streams of His grace and truth. Yes, may hosts upon hosts then go forth from here, who as faithful and blessed workers in the heavenly harvest and as brave and victorious fighters in the wars of the Lord fill the land everywhere with the Word of Christ, right up to its outermost borders, and may they thus bring to countless immortal ones created for eternal life and redeemed by Christ with a great price, the eternal sunlight of divine truth against the darkness of this world, the eternal inexhaustible fountain of divine grace against all men's sinfulness, the heavenly balm of divine consolation against misery and death, and thus bring them healing, heaven and eternal salvation from generation to generation, until

the last day of the world; and all to the praise, honor, and glory of God, and of the Lamb that sits upon the throne of glory, from eternity to eternity. Amen.

As the day of the dedication of the new building arrived, it was clearly visible that Sept. 9, 1883 was a day of joy not only for the congregations in St. Louis, but for the entire Synod. An eye and ear witness reports the following in [Der Lutheran of Sept. 15, 1883](#): “People had hurried to the festival place with joyful expectation, but nobody had guessed that a gathering of 20,000 people would gather. Who would not have been able to feel their hearts in an uplifted festive mood at the sight of this crowd of fellow believers! Whose mouth would have remained without rejoicing and cheering? Almost every state, yes, every major city of our country had sent its representatives to the festival square. From the upper Mississippi, from Minnesota and the Gulf of Mexico, from California and across the Atlantic Ocean, from Germany, festival visitors had come. All the railroads that flowed into St. Louis brought in special trains hundreds, even thousands of festival goers, for example from Chicago, Milwaukee, Fort Wayne, Pittsburgh. Probably about 160 pastors, 133 of them, who had studied in the old Concordia seminary in the newest as well as in the oldest time, had gathered for the celebration. Various synods had sent their representatives, e.g. the Norwegian Synod: President Koren, Pastor Preus, Pastor Ottesen, Professor Stub from Madison; the Wisconsin synod: President Bading and Professor Gräbner; the Minnesota Synod: President Albrecht and Pastor Tirmenstein. The officials of the Missouri Synod were also largely present. — Those who observed the meeting a little more closely soon had to realize that here only one joy came to the fore, namely: With these many baptized ones I am intimately connected... known or unknown — one was aware that one was connected with one another in the Lord and rejoiced together in the same.

At 10:30 a.m. the celebration was marked by the singing of

Psalm 150 by the students, and then opened with the hymn “[Praise the Almighty, my Soul, Adore Him](#)” [[German: “Lobe den Herrn o meine Seele”](#)], which was sung to the accompaniment of the trumpets and into which the whole assembly joined. After the end of this song, Dr. Walther entered the stage, which was set up in the open air, and gave an address with his usual strength and freshness, which was listened to by the many thousands with the greatest excitement and attention until the end. The same reads as follows:

In the name of the Holy Trinity, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit

Amen. [[The following address was originally partially translated in Suelflow’s *Servant of the Word* book p. 95-101](#)]

Honored guests!

In particular beloved fellow believers and confessors in the Lord!

What is it that has gathered us today from near and far in thousands and thousands around this new building? What is it that we have already sent up here a thousand voices of praise, thanksgiving and joyful songs out loud to God? — Is it the size and stateliness of this new building? Truly no! It is probably as mighty a building as it is dainty, praising its masters. Like an adorned royal bride it rises above all its neighbors. But who among us has not seen larger, more elaborate and more ornate buildings? Who among us, therefore, would have been so foolish as to travel hundreds, even thousands of miles and hurry across the world’s oceans just to feast his eyes on such a building? — How is it? Is the reason for our present joy, then, that we [Lutherans](#) believe we have built this great and beautiful edifice and made a name for ourselves before the world? That is far from it! For woe betide us then! Then this building would only be a standing witness to our arrogance and thus not a monument to our honour but to our shame.

We cannot and will not deny that our hearts are beating with joy today, when we consider that the institution, which

once opened 44 years ago in a poor little log cabin in the middle of the forest, is now moving into a palace in the middle of this cosmopolitan city. But as a still living eye- and ear-witness I can testify that 44 years ago our little log cabin also appeared to us as a palace, into which we therefore moved then with no less joy than we do today into this magnificent building. Our poverty was so great that even such a small log cabin stood before our eyes like a miracle, for which we could only thank God with tears of joy. Therefore, no, no, my brethren, it is not the greatness and stateliness of this new building, nor the vain honor of being its builders, that is the true, real reason for our joy today, but something quite different.

Now, Lutherans, convinced that I will only lend words to the thoughts of your hearts, I beg you, let me show you that the true, real reason for our joy of celebration today is none other than this threefold one: the final purpose for which this new building is to serve alone; the circumstances which alone have caused and made necessary it; and finally the love which alone has built and adorned it.

That schools, be they elementary or higher, are institutions of the highest importance for state and church, needs no proof. Enemy and friend alike willingly concede this to us. The good and the bad of a people depends on their schools. They are the foundation on which a people builds itself. In them lie the roots of a people's fortune or its misfortune, its existence or its decay and destruction. — But that the schools in which religion is the main subject of instruction are still of special importance is just as undeniable. Schools of religion are either the poisonous laboratories where the poison is prepared which already kills the young souls of the future citizens; or they are the heavenly gardens on earth where already the young plants are watered with dew from heaven for the awakening

of a new divine life both here and there. — The most important educational institutions are, however, without doubt those colleges where young people are not only taught religion, but where they themselves are prepared to become teachers of it. For either such schools are, as Luther calls them, high gates of hell if God's Word does not reign in them, or are high gates of heaven if God's Word does reign in them. And to give shelter to such a high school, that, and nothing else, is the high and glorious final purpose of this new building as well.

This house should not serve both earthly and heavenly things. This steeple, rising to the sky with its church bell, should not only adorn this house, but above all it should show its character and, hour after hour, day and night, shout to those inside and outside: “Sursum corda!” Here is a house of holy studies! Here is a house of prayer! Here is a house of God!

In this house, not man's word and man's wit and wisdom, but God's Word, and nothing but God's Word and the whole Word of God, and what serves to unlock and use it, shall be studied with untiring diligence, day after day, from the first light of dawn until the sinking night. Therefore this house is not at all so magnificently decorated for the sake of its inhabitants, but for the sake of the Word of God, which is to have a dwelling therein.

In this house, however, the Book of all books is not to be rationalistically explained and interpreted from reason, not papistically from the writings of the Fathers, not enthusiastically from alleged new revelations, but apostolically Christian from itself alone, that is, Bible from Bible, Scripture from Scripture, the Old Testament from the New, the New from the Old, the individual from the whole and the whole from the individual.

In this house, not new doctrines are to be researched, but only the old and yet eternally young doctrine of Him

who says, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”

This house is not to be a place where the private opinions and private views of any person, however pious, are expressed, but only where the doctrine of the one holy universal Christian Church of all times and places is to be urged and brought to bear.

This house is not intended to represent the special doctrines of any sect, but only the doctrines drawn from God's clear words of the orthodox Evangelical Lutheran Church of Unaltered Augsburg Confession, this first-born daughter of the Reformation, this true visible Church of God on earth, are to be presented as divine truth.

In this house, the doctrine of the Reformation is not to be reformed again, but rather to be guarded and preserved as our Church publicly confessed it before the whole world with great joy of faith and unparalleled heroism three and a half hundred years ago, sealed with the blood of many thousands of her sons and daughters, and laid down for all time in her confessional writings, as an inalienable, inviolable treasure to be guarded and preserved with incorruptible loyalty.

In this house, therefore, the main teacher shall be Christ, our one Master himself, and after the holy apostles and prophets shall be none other than Dr. Martin Luther, the Reformer of the Church, who was raised and sealed by God and who, according to divine prophecy, flew as the angel with the eternal gospel through the middle of the heaven of the Church.

In this house never shall light and darkness, truth and error, live peacefully side by side, but the King of Truth alone shall reign, who said: “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. [[John 8:31-32](#)] I came not to send peace, but a sword [[Matt. 10:34](#)].”

In this house, only Christians who are living believers

are to be received and equipped as heralds of the gospel of Christ, the Son of God and Savior of the world, who confess with the holy twelve apostles: “I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. [1 Cor 2:2] Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. [Rom. 3:28] For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast. [Eph 2:8-9] Fear God and give glory to him. [Rev 14:7]”

In this house, not only shall the minds of those received therein be filled with the teachings of divine revelation, but these teachings shall above all be impressed into their hearts, so that they may one day, having come out of the school of the Holy Spirit Himself, bear witness in truth: “For of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh. [Luke 6:45] We also believe, and therefore speak. [2 Cor. 4:13]”

In this house, those who are received in it should not only be given the opportunity, far from the noise of the world, to lie in hallowed surroundings for their holy studies, but through the grace of God they should also be brought to the point where they willingly renounce the goods and the honors of the world and consecrate their lives, their powers, their souls to the service of Christ and to the saving of the world until their death, and therefore also to when the time comes, with a thousand joys, to exchange this magnificent building for the poorest sod hut of our American West.

This house is to become an arsenal of God, in which God-fearing young men are to be outfitted with the spiritual armor of Christ's soldiers, so that they may be able not only to plant and water, but also to fight victoriously with the sword of the Spirit against all the strongholds of the Prince of Darkness, even if he appeared in the likeness of an angel of light against the Word of the Most High.

This house is to contain a spiritual fountain, from which the water of eternal life is led over mountains and

valleys and everywhere the spiritual deserts are transformed into green meadows of lively believers' congregations.

In short, this house should be dedicated solely to the glory of God and the salvation of redeemed sinners.

How is that? Isn't that a great, glorious end in itself? And isn't the same, for all believing Christians and especially for us Lutherans, reason enough that our hearts beat faster with joy, since we now see this new building completed with God's help without any accidents and so well succeeded before us? Is that not reason enough that we raise our voices today and shout out loud and joyful to one another: "The Lord has done great things for us, so let us rejoice"? Yes, that we shout to all our fellow believers, confessors and comrades in arms, wherever they may be in the world, "Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord!"? [[Psalm 150:6](#)] — Yes, truly, my brethren!

But the real reason for our joy of celebration today is not only the high and glorious final purpose of this new building; we are all the more delighted by the circumstances brought about by God, which alone prompted this greater new building and finally made it a matter of unavoidable necessity.

When our synod, the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other States, first gathered in the blessed city of Chicago 36 years ago, it was a small, unnoticed group of only twelve poor congregations. The church, which in this country still called itself Evangelical Lutheran, was in the deepest decay. The teaching of our church was an unknown territory to them. The few pastors who still knew something about it and wanted to hold on to it were considered to be limited minds, which one hoped would soon be extinct. The confessional writings were hardly known by name and were considered to be outdated documents of earlier, unexplained times. Instead of Luther's doctrines, this church, which called itself after Luther, was dominated by the doctrines of Zwingli and obvious

rationalism, strangely bound up with fanatical [*schwärmerischen* = as Methodists, Pentecostals] methods of conversion. Hardly any pastors had a regular call according to God's Word; almost all were rather hired for one or more years. Immortal souls were handed over on trial to unprepared, immature men, while Christian parish schools were abolished and Lutheran youth were handed over in good pagan fashion to the non-religious state for education. In short, the so-called Lutheran Church of our country was dead at that time, a mockery of all sects that, like hungry night birds, divided into their corpse.

When now our synod appeared with the then unheard-of slogan "God's Word and Luther's doctrine pure shall to eternity endure" it was not only the anti-Christian papacy, not only the syncretistic, unionistic Evangelical fellowship, not only the fanatical sects, but above all the local so-called Lutheran Church, which fought our synod as a new Old Lutheran sect leading to Rome with the greatest bitterness and, as a foreign plant and un-American invader, confidently prophesied its inglorious demise in the near future.

But our prospects were also really bleak. To want to transplant the old Lutheran Church, which submits to every letter of the Word of God, to this new land of untamed lust for freedom, seemed indeed to be a quite hopeless, more than a foolish undertaking. But far from allowing itself to be distracted by this, our Synod did not ask: What must we do to become great and numerous? but only: What must we do to be found faithful before the Lord of the Church? Success, she knew, was not in her hands, and so she committed this to God.

And what happened? — The ill-intended plans of our enemies did not succeed. When the congregations saw that the pastors of our Synod did not proclaim any new doctrine, but preached nothing but what they, the congregations, had learned from their dear Small Catechism of Luther;

when the congregations saw that the pastors of our Synod brought them the highest thing that a preacher can bring them, namely, certainty of God's grace and of their salvation; when the congregations saw that the pastors of our Synod did not want to dominate them like a papal bull, but on the contrary, sought to bring them to the knowledge of their glorious Christian freedom and their sacred congregation rights; when the congregations saw that the pastors of our Synod did not seek their temporal but only their immortal souls; when the congregations saw that the pastors of our Synod preferred to suffer hunger and sorrow, disgrace, persecution and expulsion, rather than give way in one letter to "God's Word and Luther's doctrine": — behold, one congregation after another entered our synodical union. The mustard seed took root, sprouted up joyfully and gradually became like a mighty tree, under whose broad shady branches the birds of heaven dwell. The old Lutheranism, at first despised, even ridiculed because of its initial diminutive size, gradually became a power under the hot battles in America, so that finally everyone who wanted to be considered truly Lutheran had to be comfortable to profess the doctrines of our Synod. The old book treasures of our Church, especially her confessional writings and the writings of Luther, were pulled out of their dust, carried from house to house and eagerly read and studied by our people. Like a prairie fire, not only did truly Lutheran faith and Lutheran life and character spread again unstoppably over the country, but God also gave us a unity of faith and a joy of faith with an intimate brotherly love, so that sometimes the days of Luther seemed to have returned among us. Wherever a small Lutheran church grew up like a fruit tree, even in lonely prairie, a Lutheran schoolhouse soon sprouted as a young plant. The old pure songs full of faith and love, as our fathers sang them, resounded here again with their old sweet melodies. In short, the true

Lutheran Church, whose funeral dirges had already been sung in all the world, came to life again here, rose from its grave and planted the victory flag of the pure Gospel in more than a thousand places of our great Union of States. For years now, the Macedonian cry of “Come over and help us” has been heard on all sides. An ever more powerful stream of Lutheran immigrants, including those of our German language, is pouring over our country and settling here, so that almost week after week new congregations are springing up, many of which desire teachers in church and school from us. And not only within our new fatherland, but also from the land of our fathers, yes, from the farthest countries of the world, the cry for help has been reaching us for years, deeply moving our hearts. Everywhere, doors open to us at the entrance with the joyful message of the free grace of God in Christ for all sinners. Even though hundreds of workers have already been sent out from our institutions for the great harvest, the number of requests for such workers has not diminished over time, but rather increased, so that at last we have been unable to fulfill most of these requests with sad hearts. And so it came to pass that even the insufficient number of students could not find a place in our building. A larger new building became a matter of unavoidable necessity.

So I ask you then, beloved brethren in the Lord, is not all this a cause for great joy for us today? Or does a farmer perhaps get angry and start complaining when his harvest, which he has safely brought in, is so great that he finds himself compelled to dismantle his barns, which have gotten too small, and to build greater? No, he rather rejoices in it and raises his hands with fervent thanks to God, the kindly giver. Behold, we also have no cause to be angry and lament that we have been compelled by God's abundant blessing to perform such a great and costly construction; we also have

but rather the cause for us to rejoice in this from our hearts and to lift up our hands to God today with humble thanksgiving. Up to now, every new request for admission to our Institution has filled us with a new concern rather than with joy; but from today, opening the wide open spaces of this new Concordia of ours, we can joyfully cry out to every godly newcomer: Welcome! “Come in, blessed one of the Lord!” — Isn't that joy? —

But, my brothers, there is one more thing that fills us today with great joy: it is love alone that has built and decorated this new building.

No noble millionaire has performed this magnificent building and offered it as a gift to our poor church. No prince has forced us to make involuntary sacrifices for this work by means of a school tax he has imposed with legal authority. No non-Lutheran has been approached by us and expected to contribute even a single penny, contrary to his conscience, to the construction of this shelter for a nursery of our church. No one has been wrested and squeezed out of his gift by unevangelical appeals to his conscience. No one has been deceived by the false pretence that he will acquire abundant indulgences through abundant gifts and, as it is said, build a step into heaven. No one has been flattered by the excitement of his sense of honor and low, hypocritical flattery. We Lutherans abhor the principle that the end justifies the means. Therefore, according to the apostolic principle: “God loves a cheerful giver”, [[2 Cor. 9:7](#)] nothing has happened among us but our love has been kindly stimulated. Only the crying need of countless children of our church has been painted before our eyes in vivid colors, who in this land of immigration wander like sheep without a shepherd in spiritual deserts, and without the preaching of the consoling Gospel would finally have to languish spiritually. But above all, we have been reproached by the love of Christ, the

Good Shepherd, who seeks the lost, who shed his blood for all men, who wants to make all men saved, and who wants all men saved, including the lonely children of our Church, to be called to Him, and that we, whom He has so abundantly provided with the Bread of Life, are His called instruments. “O my brethren, let us help our brothers,” we called out to one another. And, behold! thereupon a thousand upon a thousand hearts and hands opened without delay and with joy in our dear congregations. The inhabitants of the land have competed with the inhabitants of the cities, the poor with the rich, the women with the men, young women with the young, and even orphans and widows with one another, to help that this building may be built and adorned in the most glorious way.

So then, my brothers and sisters in the Lord (God knows, not to flatter you, but to the glory of Him whose Word, grace and Spirit has worked all this in you), I make bold to say, to speak freely and openly here: This house, with the Lord's help, has built up your love flowing from faith and decorated it so beautifully. O wonderful, precious house! For what would be the same without this love of its builders, even if it were made of pure gold, silver and precious stones? It would be a house from which God turned His face away, and into which He would not enter. But the great gifts of love of the earthly richly blessed among us and the small, precious mites of our poor, widows and orphans transform every piece of wood of this building before God's eyes into pure, shining gold, every stone of its walls into pure, sparkling diamonds. Sooner or later this building may fall down, like all human work: as a monument of love of believing Lutheran Christians, this house will stand before God's eyes forever, yes, forever.

But, my brethren, blessing and prosperity of all works of love also comes from the Lord alone. So let us beg Him again

today, as we once begged Him 44 years ago, when that unadorned little forest cabin finally stood before us:

“Enter in! Enter in!

Dedicate this house, O Jesus!” —

Oh yes, Lord, not for the sake of our dull, unclean, imperfect love, but for the sake of your burning, pure, eternal, perfect love, we ask you to accept this house, which we hereby hand over to you. It shall not be our house, but yours, yes your house. Take it under your gracious and almighty care. Move into it today and make your home in it, and be and remain the right landlord in it. Bless the teachers and students. Bless therein the heavenly and the earthly bread. Let this house also be the source of ever greater blessings in town and country, in cabin and palace, for time and eternity. Bless our dear Synod and all its congregations whose love has built this house. Bless the dear brethren who have borne the great burden of caring for the execution of this work in never-tiring love for us all. Bless the master builders who planned and directed this construction and the builders who worked on it. Bless this land and its government, under whose earthly protection this house now stands. Bless this city that has welcomed it willingly and kindly into its bosom. Finally, bless our celebration today to strengthen our faith, to ignite our love and to revive our hope.

Thanks, praise, glory and honour be to your great name, here in time and hereafter from eternity to eternity. Amen! Amen!

[↑] On May 7, 1884, the Fourth Delegate Synod, representing the 19th General Synod convention, met in St. Louis; it is composed, as its name indicates, of delegates from the various District Synods, which have now reached the number 11 and cover the entire territory of the United

States, as well as Canada within their borders. Already at the Jubilee Synod, which took place in 1872, it was decided that from two to seven congregations with voting rights would meet and send a pastor and a deputy as delegates. In addition, the professors at the educational institutions are obliged to attend the delegate synod. As a result, 200 members were present at the recent synod, not counting the considerable number of visitors. They filled the chapel of the great and magnificent seminary building almost to the last seat and waited until the end of the sessions for ten full days. What moved the hearts at this Synod convention was summarized in the [\[↑\]](#) opening address of the venerable general President H. C. Schwan in a way that made everyone rise to joyful praise and thanksgiving toward the Lord God. The synodical address reads as follows: [\(↑\)](#)

“The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.”
(Psalm 126:3)

This word of the Psalm expresses what moves our hearts now, and so we must above all make our voices heard. The Lord has done great things for us, a great help in the great distress that had affected us.

Let us just think back. There was a lot of pressure on all of us the last time we got together. An article of our Christian faith had been attacked, an article which Scripture clearly reveals, and our confession testifies to just as clearly; an article which, if overturned, had to take with it the basis for our salvation. In its place they had tried to put a doctrine which, if accepted, would have transferred our salvation on to a very different ground.

And this had not been done in a straightforward and open manner — in that case it would hardly have been dangerous — but it had been done in a rather veiled manner and under a deceptive pretence. The opponents presumed highly and solemnly that it was not the doctrine of the Scriptures and the confession of faith that

but rather our terrible falsification of those whom they were fighting; they insisted that it was the truth of the Gospel itself which they needed to save against us and to preserve it for Christendom.

And those who talked like this were not our old enemies, whose voices were known. They were brethren who did this. They professed their hearts were bleeding, but they couldn't help it. Therein lay the danger.

And this danger had come quite close to us. There were already some of us back then who were openly on the side of our accusers. Others seemed to be on the way. Some had let themselves be confused. Quite a few saw nothing but division and ruin for our fellowship. Yes, who would deny it, with anxious hearts we all waited for the things that were to come. This was the situation we were in when we last met. Fightings without, fears within.

And now? Now we see all happy faces here. Our sadness has been turned to joy. The danger is over. The battle is over. We are at peace. Isn't that something?

But how is it? Doesn't the cries of war still echo around us today? Is not the air filled with the arrows of our enemies? And we should have peace? — But what the world calls peace, we do not. There is no peace with those who make war. As long as they fight against the truth, they must be our enemies. But still, we have peace. We have peace even as and in the same way as the first Christian congregation, Acts 9:31, had peace. The apostolic church also had enemies at that time and continued to, and these enemies also had and kept their great wrath and did what they could to disturb the church of God. And yet Scripture says, “So now the congregation had peace throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria,” for He who ruled over it like sun and shield, and protected it with His right hand, had called out to its persecutors: “So far and no

further! That's enough." That gave us peace in the middle of a fight. And so now we also have peace, peace throughout the country, through all our districts, in all our congregations. The quarrel no longer troubles us, not even outwardly, and as many of us as are children of God, they have peace not only with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, not only with their own conscience, but also among each other, and now also in this matter they hold firmly to each other in one sense and one opinion against all attempts of the enemy. Is that not a great thing?

But it is also not a shameful peace, but a victorious peace that we have. Not as if our opponents had declared themselves overcome, which they might have done. Not that everyone else has fallen to us. Even the apostolic congregation should not be so well off. But just as they once did, so we now have victory. For only those to whom the Lord grants victory are victors. But before God, always and at any time, the one who has survived the temptation and has kept faith is the one who has already won and wears the wreath. And that is the victory that has been given to us. And O! how gladly we want to be content with it! After all, this is the only victory that brings the true booty.

And there was no shortage of such booty. We know we've won something because we enjoy it. The dear Holy Scripture, studied in temptation and opened up more deeply, has become all the higher, more glorious and sweeter for us. The confession of our Church has once again proved itself in this struggle to be the good confession of the faith that was once given to the saints. But this has only increased its prestige. We have become all the more confident by standing, against all regard of man, solely on the Word of the Scriptures and becoming fools before the world for this Word. For even a source of consolation, which had been badly buried, has been opened to us again abundantly and has also done its part to make our hearts firm and confident

in the truth. United and stronger than before, we stand now.

Let us now look at all this, consider how little this in particular was to be expected according to human probability, and how hoping quickly turned into good what was intended to be bad: we do not know what else to say but: A great, great thing has happened to us!

Now then, who did this great thing? Who has won victory, peace and booty? Was it us? Did we at least do our part? Were we perhaps too much superior in scholarship to our adversaries? Oh, our erudition, no matter how great it was, could not have been the deciding factor here. Or did we understand better than they did how to explain the apparent contradiction between general grace and the special election of individuals and make it acceptable to reason? That helped us even less. We did not even try. No, no! to speak humanly, we had everything against us in this struggle — except one thing. Our opponents had an enormous advantage over us. For before the crowd, which does not think, but would rather be considered enlightened and free, not we, but they, as fighters of dark madness, heroes of light and martyrs of freedom, could appear, and that has seldom missed its effect. In the case of those who always want to first understand and make sense before they decide to accept divine truths themselves (and that is what old Adam wants in Christians as well), they were able to invoke the judgment of “common sense”, which we were not allowed to do. After all, there was no secret in their teaching about what even the wisest man has to put his finger on. There everything rhymed with the natural human thoughts and feelings. Conclusions of any kind had free play and full validity. For the sake of their doctrine no one had to become a fool before the world. Was

that not a great advantage for them? And did they not make use of it? — Among those who base their convictions on human respect (even if unconsciously), even in matters of faith, they could point to a number of “fathers” who, though not of their own mind, often seemed to agree with them in words. And how much use this was to them, especially for those who knew the least about these fathers, is more obvious by the day. — Indeed, they were able to present the Holy Scriptures themselves to unsuspecting and untrained Christians here and there, with greater success than we did. For the more — and rightly so — the dear simple-minded people are concerned about the general promises of grace in the Gospel, the easier it is to persuade them that only from these passages can the doctrine of God's eternal election be taken or explained. In short, what only reason and feeling of the natural man (also in Christians) thinks, desires and wants, all this spoke in this struggle for them and against us. Would it have been a miracle if they had succeeded in enchanting our people in crowds and finally even led them over to their camp with a resounding performance?

And yet the exact opposite of all this happened. After the first shock had passed and now it came to light where this attack actually came from and where it was aimed at, our congregations turned their backs on their supposed saviors and liberators in such an overwhelming way that they themselves stood there dismayed, and that they have not yet been able to find their way in. Congregations which had previously paid little special attention to the doctrine in question are now, to their amazement, firmly opposed to all the attempts of our opponents.

Well, whose work was all this? Was it supposed to be our doing? No, no! It was done by the Lord and it was a miracle before our eyes. [cp. Ps. 118:23] No one could do this, no one did this, but He who does great things to us and to all ends.

But why do you think He did these great things properly? If it was not for the sake of His beloved Son, if it was not by free grace, if it was not because He caught the wise in their wisdom, and because He chose that which is weak before the world, that He might bring shame to that which is strong, that no flesh should boast before Him; if it was not because of these, we know not why He did it. Nor do we know how it was done. Except that it must have been done by his Word and his Spirit. In this way He must have entered into our hearts, must have made the text more powerful than all the glosses of the false art, must have broken and hindered all evil counsel and will, and must have strengthened us and held us fast in His word and faith. Otherwise it could not have happened. For that is His good, gracious will.

But if it is really the Lord himself and the Lord alone who has done so much for us, and by grace, well then, let us rejoice from our hearts.

Happy, not gloating. Let us not rejoice in the fall of our enemies. That would not please Him who can and will restore the fallen. Merrily, not gloriously, as though we considered that robbery which has been given us by grace. Then we would take back from God the glory we had given Him, which we had only given Him by pretense. That would be a fine sign that we ourselves are already facing the trap. — No, if we sincerely believe that it is the Lord who has done great things for us, then our joy must be of a completely different kind, it must be the joy in the Lord. He who rejoices must rejoice in the Lord and be joyful in the power of His strength; He who boasts must boast in the Lord alone. So may He then be the joy of us all.

But in such joy we should really forget what is behind, all the wrong that has been done to us, all the fear and misery that has been inflicted on us. Let it no longer be thought of for the sake of the great things that God has done for us.

Like a woman whose hour is past no longer thinks of fear for the sake of her present joy. — With this joy in our hearts, let us rather confidently stretch ourselves forward, let us be joyful in hope. We want to trust the One who has sustained us up to now, that His faithfulness and grace will hold us to the end, yes, we want to rejoice in advance of the Great things which He will certainly do for us even further. — But at last we are to prove by deed that this joy does not leave us lazy and barren in good works, but that it makes us willing, zealous and powerful for all that pleases the Lord. So let us make good use of the time of peace, following the example of the apostolic church! Let us build ourselves up like her, walking in the fear of God, and there will be no lack of the comfort of the Holy Spirit.

Just as in the Old Testament burnt offerings the clouds of incense surrounded, enveloped and covered up everything that would have been unattractive and unpleasant for the senses, so also with us the joy in the Lord and the praise of the great God and our Saviour must envelop, hold down, dampen and devour everything that is still in us from below; but on the other hand lift, carry and strengthen that which strives upwards in us. Then our sacrifice of joy and thanksgiving will be a sweet savor before the Lord, He will remain with us with His grace, and we will be able to sing anew day after day:

The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad. [Ps. 126:3]

[↑] [A review](#)

Of the history of the Missouri Synod may still be permitted with a few words. At first sight it is a story full of church battles, but in which victory is not lacking. Where there is faith, there is also victory, Rev. 15:2. While the Church of the Reformation is the prefigured, predicted Second Temple of the New Covenant (see the sermon in Dr. Walther's

[Lutherische Brosamen](#) on Ezra 3:8-13) [[“Lutheran Crumbs”](#), or [Baseley’s From Our Master’s Table](#)], it is not surprising that those who are building this temple today will suffer the same fate as those in Nehemiah 4:17: “with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon.” It must be fought, although it is something very distressing that there is so much strife in Christianity. Many push themselves against it and go astray. Many fall in battle or are wounded at least. It is also, let us say with Luther, the greatest and most harmful annoyance of the Church, the dissension and division in doctrine, which even the devil drives to the highest, and is generally brought about by a number of arrogant, stubborn and overambitious heads, who want to be something special, to fight for their honor and glory; they cannot be compared with anyone else, thinking it would be their disgrace if they were not of a more learned and greater spirit, others do not give honor to anyone, even if they see that he has greater gifts than they. Therefore it must be fought against the false spirits, it requires the honor of God. Where the Word of God is taught clearly and more purely, where the doctrine is diligently pursued, that we are justified without works by faith alone, there the name of God is sanctified. But Satan does not like this; he wants us to teach and live differently than the Word of God teaches; he tries to lead us away from the Word in every way, in a crass way so that we reject it, in a finer way so that we allow ourselves to be led astray from the right meaning of it. And Satan never lacks tools. The world is an enemy of the Word, for it takes all glory from the haughty hearts of men and disturbs them in their lust for sin.

Are we to stand by and watch Satan rob God of His glory, when He wants to deceive us that we do not give God His due glory? Are we to watch idly when the Pope, as the real Antichrist, fights against Christ with his servants? — when the rationalists want to put blind reason over God's Word and take away the sole dominion of the divine Word. Shall we let the United “evangelicals”

have their way, who betray the heavenly truth, and consider error equal to error? Shall we be silent when the doctrine of grace is obscured by innumerable people?

No, we cannot do this. If there is to be peace, if there is to be peace, if there is to be an end to war, then this is only possible if Satan ceases to be Satan and God's adversary; but this is not possible; or if we deny Christ and his Word and make common cause with our enemies; — we cannot, we do not want to, we would dishonor God. — It cannot be otherwise; the salvation of the Church also demands a struggle. Only through struggle are the treasures given to the Church preserved, which the enemies want to snatch from her. The crown is robbed from the one who does not hold what he has and does not defend himself against those who want to take it from him. — — Those err grievously who think that it is best for the church to live quite peacefully, without struggle. God's Word and experience tell us otherwise. How can the church be in a happy state when truth and error are peacefully reconciled, when the wolves are not prevented from tearing the sheep apart? “These are”, — says Luther, “very wise, excellent people who can teach the Holy Spirit how to govern the Christian Church. Yes, my friend, if the devil did not want to bite Christ's heels, or had to leave it alone, such a quiet, peaceful church would be easy to have.” — (see [Prof. Günther's Foreword to volume 40 of *Der Lutheraner*](#).)

Such a cemetery peace reigned in the Lutheran Church in this country before the Saxon Lutherans and those who left the Ohio Synod raised their voices, before *Der Lutheraner* in particular let its testimony go out. Where Satan's works are attacked, such things cause much uproar. He meant it seriously and led many a companion into battle. But what did the founders of the Missouri Synod do? What weapons did they use in battle? It is often emphasized in this writing that they brought the divine Word and nothing else.

But they were also serious about God's Word, so the truth they fought for had to win. They did not try any experiments in church order, they did not rely on human statutes and authorities, they wanted to build the temple, which is invisible in itself, yet stands firmer than heaven and earth, because Jesus Christ is its cornerstone. For the name of the Lord Jesus they offered their souls, as it is said of Saul and Barnabas. This is why they also fought against delusion, as if the efficacy of the Word and the holy sacraments were bound to some human institution, or to a particular teaching within the Church. Christ and His Word alone shall prevail, otherwise no one shall rule in the Church of God! The Missouri Synod is built on this foundation. "The written Word of God", so the Constitution of the Missouri Synod declares, in agreement with the Lutheran Confession, that Holy Scripture alone must be and remain the source, rule and guideline of faith, both for those who come with us and for those who wish to remain members of our church fellowship. The Word of Christ also proves its worth in the case of a synod; that only such a house built on a rock will stand still when the rain is falling and the winds are blowing; but such a house built on sand must make a great fall in the time of trial. Someone might object, it goes without saying that in a Lutheran synod one refers to the Scriptures! Yet there are not many of them today who do not prefer a sandy ground to the rock-solid ground of the divine Word. The spirit of union, which is like a pestilential air over the Protestant area, has led to the opinion that in many doctrines, especially those concerning discernment, the Holy Scriptures are dark and some articles of faith are so doubtful that they should be relaxed for everyone until perhaps the whole Church has decided them, that is, until they have become one. Such people build their houses on sand! They do not believe that the Word carries the church, they think,

the church must sustain the Word. That is why some base their faith on the so-called Christian consciousness, or on their enlightened reason, or on a doctrinal development in the history of the Church, i.e. on tradition. Even our newest opponents cry out: The fathers, fathers! and boast that they have “witnesses” for their little finds, even though they do not meet the meaning of these fathers, who are actually the later Lutheran dogmatists. But even if it were the case that they could rightly refer to such fathers, the Christian conscience is trapped only in God's Word, and cannot be bound to any human testimony. Luther's enemies had much more reason than our opponents of today can have when they said that not with the Holy Scriptures but with the Roman Catholic fathers, and with the decisions of the councils, they could refute Luther's doctrines. But just as Luther, when asked: “Would you be wiser than so many fathers, popes and councils?”, answered: not my word and not yours, nor the word of the fathers shall apply, “The Word of God shall establish articles of faith, and no one else, not even an angel!” [[SA II, 2, 15](#)] How Luther pointed backwards from the Fathers to the foundation of the apostles and prophets, and recalled Christianity to Christ, the only arch-Shepherd, and how Luther spoke the word to all the rebellious spirits who wanted to teach him, Matt. 17:5: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him”, so the founders of the Missouri Synod also went back, they preferred to sit at the fount of the Reformation, through which the pure fountains of Israel were reopened to Christianity. Already in 1866 Dr. Walther confessed in a Synod address: “When 20 years ago, 16 pastors gathered in the city of Fort Wayne (as reported in chapter VI of this writing) to draft a constitution for the then newly formed Synod of Missouri, Ohio and other States, these pastors proceeded from the conviction, which they had acquired by God's grace, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Unaltered Augsburg

Confession is the true visible Church of God on earth, and that therefore the doctrines laid down in the public confessions of this church were pure, as purified silver in an earthen crucible, and that they proved their worth seven times over; convinced that Luther was not a mere witness of this or that truth, but the angel with the eternal Gospel promised in God's Word, who was to fly through the midst of heaven, the Reformer of the Church chosen, awakened and called by God Himself, and that the Reformation victoriously carried out through Luther's ministry was a real Reformation, a true renewal of the Church, they decided to do nothing new, but to take the Church of the Reformation as their model in all aspects, in doctrine and practice”, (*Lutherische Brosamen* p. 535) [*From Our Master's Table*, p. 251].

When the founders of the Missouri Synod took this path, there was no shortage of enemies who prophesied their doom, and there was no lack of manifold accusations and blasphemies. To this day, however, the exhibitions of the opponents cancel each other out. Because the Missouri Synod with Luther granted the preaching ministry no violence other than that of the Word and the full dignity of the spiritual priesthood to believing Christians, it was accused of abandoning the faith to the arbitrariness of the mob; and because it was at the same time anxious to lay the foundation for a Evangelical order and discipline and to sharpen the use of confessional registration and of both keys, it was accused of Papist presumption of power and priestly rule. The same thing is still happening today. While our newest opponents accuse us of apostasy from Lutheranism, as if we had fallen to Calvinism, which is rejected in our confessional writings, they accuse us once again of being far too exclusive Lutherans, of associating “exaggerations” with the confessional writings, while we do not tolerate differences in subordinate points (namely doctrinal points) and do not accept such open questions as the Iowans prefer. This is the judgment of Pastor [W. Rohnert](#), who already made himself known in the Election of Grace controversy,

and his booklet entitled: *Kirche, Kirchen und Sekten* (Church, Churches and Sects), published in 1885 in 3rd edition. Only then, if the Lutheran confession did not go back to God's Word in all parts, would we have to distinguish between those doctrines which we consider binding and those which we release. That is the way we judge the teachings of the heterodox, whose confession is only partially correct; but we accept the Lutheran Confessions without reserve, because we recognize in it the thoroughly Scriptural confession and the Evangelical Lutheran Church, to which the Missouri Synod wants to belong, as the orthodox church of this last age.

It was this realization that lived in those who gathered in 1847 to found the Missouri Synod. Not church-political plans, but: “**I believe, therefore I speak**”, that was the sole reason for that documentary testimony of their confession. The old Lutheran rhyme: “God's Word and Luther's Doctrine Pure Shall to Eternity Endure” was not only written by the Synod as its watchword at the top of its publications, it was also written and it shone and burned as a light and fire in the hearts that Luther was the Reformer or church-renewer awakened by God in this last age of the world, and that the church named after him was the bearer of pure Christian doctrine appointed by God. From this also follows the seriousness with which the Missouri Synod follows the apostolic injunction: “Contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” [Jude 3] The Lutheran symbols should not only be carried around in the hand or reside on the pastors' bookshelves, but the solemn subscription to the Word of God and of the Church's confessions should not only be regarded as an church law, whereby one enters the synodical association as if through a door, generally by committing oneself; the inner conviction of truth should move the whole heart and life, and whether the number of synod members is increasing or decreasing, the testimony of truth must nevertheless go forth, and

unity on the basis of truth, that is the unity of the Spirit alone, must be the one that is to be held ever more firmly, the more old and new enemies rise up against this testimony. As St. Paul prophesied to the apostolic church in Acts 20:30, it was also fulfilled in the Missouri Synod that false spirits arose from their own midst. The word they wrote on their banner was not taken from Scripture, nor from the Lutheran confessional writings, but its wording was in accordance with later dogmatic writings. The temptation came close to letting these spirits be granted. In other synods one is used to tolerate the deviation from the individual doctrines, and even to enter into communion and pulpit fellowship with false believers, if one only generally professes to be a Lutheran! It is certain, however, that where no doctrinal discipline is practiced, the gates are opened to the enemy who undermines the walls of the church; there the church becomes more and more a playground for those whom Luther at Marburg in 1529 once called: “You have a different spirit than we!” That is why the Missouri Synod was only able to exist as an orthodox church fellowship in itself, by renouncing, according to the command of God, not only all fellowship with sects outside its camp, but also the false spirits that arose from its own midst. — As much as the members of the Missouri Synod liked to extend the hand of fellowship to those who shared the same doctrinal ground with them, or as much as they were increasingly determined to follow the Lutheran doctrine in practice, they had to testify decidedly, and prove by their action, that an outward, “paper” pledge to the Word of God and the symbols is not sufficient, for wherever a synod or a church body tolerates a syncretistic practice and in fact declares that it is right, there it has either already fallen inwardly, or it has never even stood in the confession of the truth. Where false doctrine and practice is not resisted, there can also

the commitment to pure doctrine does not last long. That is why we hold Luther's word against those who stand in the midst of such syncretistic fellowships and yet want to be considered Lutherans: “Contradict the willful spirits, otherwise your confession will be merely a mask, and of no use. Whoever considers his doctrine, faith, and confession, to be true, and not uncertain, cannot stand in the same stall with others, who teach false doctrine, or are adherents of the same, and cannot continue to speak fair words to the devil and his allies. A teacher who keeps silence in the face of errors and nevertheless wants to be a true teacher is worse than an open enthusiast, and does greater harm with his hypocrisy than a heretic; you cannot trust him.” [*St.L. ed. vol. 17, p. 1180; not in Am. Ed.; from a talk with Georg Major*]

It was Luther's steadfastness and loyalty to his confession that the dead indifference in matters of faith and the syncretistic spirit, which is only concerned with increasing the visible crowd, was stopped for quite some time. But it again required all the more seriousness and zeal to raise the banner in the midst of the current generation, following the example of the Church of the Reformation, which not only represents a certain trend, but calls back the scattered children of the Lutheran Church to the previous path, the path of truth.

“We have, if you want to call it that, made an attempt”, Dr. Walther testified in the synodical address of 1866, “to see if the doctrines of the 16th century could not also help souls in our 19th century. We have made the attempt to see whether the tree of our old Lutheran Church, which once bore such wonderful fruit for the salvation of millions of people for thousands of years, will not still show its old driving force and fruitfulness today, — and behold! our hope has not been shamed. ... The old doctrine has now again shown its old and eternally new force; thousands of souls have been led to faith

and through faith to salvation, and a church has risen, united in faith and confession and shining in love and good works.” — — “Remember, my brethren! the blessing bestowed upon us is not due to our wisdom, still less to our dignity or our zeal, but by God's grace alone to the fact that we have desponded of our knowledge, will and ability, as obedient children of the old Lutheran Church, returned to our mother's church, namely to her doctrine and practice.” (*Lutherische Brosamen*, p. 541) [*From Our Master's Table*, p. 254] What is the state of the Missouri Synod now? By God's grace, she is still united in faith and confession and radiant in love and good works today. It is already noted at the beginning of this writing that the world wanted to prophesy to the founders of the Missouri Synod from the beginning an imminent end of its activity. No sooner had the Saxon Lutherans settled in this country than one read in a radical public paper that the founders of this fellowship had been driven out of Germany (which is not true), and that the time would come when these Old Lutherans would also be driven out of America! Now no one dares to say that the Missouri Synod has grown to the detriment of the Church or the civic estate. If one were to weigh the diligence in literary works or the industriousness in good works with the activity of other fellowships, the Missouri Synod, as recent years have shown, does not lag behind others; this should be remembered especially by those who think that our Orthodoxy is something dead, that the spiritual life must be lacking in the strict Lutherans. The new seminary building, which is an ornament not only for St. Louis, but for the whole Lutheran Church, the schools for higher education and other educational institutions, of which there are more and more, with a total number of 900 students, taught by 34 professors, the orphanages, asylums, the Emigrant and Negro Mission, and finally the church buildings, of which in the last year 1883 in the Missouri Synod 92 were completed, while the General Synod

had 54, and General Council 82, all these are signs of life of which we must not be ashamed. Although the number of Missourian pastors has also grown to nearly 850, we must not forget that rapid growth and expansion sometimes occurs among enthusiastic fellowships, and even the Mohammedans of old are an example of this.

In the narrower sense, therefore, the question should be asked: where does it come from that congregations *) are pressing to get pastors from us? Could it be because they realize that we are only seeking the wool of the sheep? Or is it not rather because they know that our pastors do not deceive them, do not feed them empty-handedly, but take good care of them. We can comfortably point to what is before our eyes and say: come and see! We can see and notice that it is a matter of the heart for the pastors, that they themselves have experienced what they preach. It is true that they base their sermons on pure doctrine; they are not for the so-called revivals, for revivals brought about by compulsion; they do not resort to new measures; they do not intend to only stir up the minds and thus to catch them, but they preach the Word of God publicly and privately, the Law in its severity, the Gospel in its sweetness, of which it is certain in their hearts that the Word of God has a power that makes it alive in itself, that true heavenly divine life comes only from the Word, that it is not their ministry to give the Word even more special power and emphasis through their own actions and doings. They relentlessly punish all sins, go after the erring, seek to raise up the fallen, to comfort the afflicted, to make those in doubt certain. — Even

*) Also in the present year 1884, 70 congregations asked for candidates and therefore turned to the St. Louis faculty. Unfortunately only 40 could be provided with standing pastors. However, it is gratifying to see the trust that these vacant congregations place in the St. Louis faculty and the District Presidents.

R. [Hoffmann](#), who died in the Union (“Evangelical”), has to acknowledge some things in [his booklet](#) about the Evangelical Lutheran Missouri Synod and writes about it, [p. 23](#): “This much must be acknowledged, that the Missourians owe no small part of their influence to the unshakable consistency with which they suppress everything that looks like a strange fire on the altar, for the simple Christian in particular does not want to waver and vacillate in matters of faith, but rather desires a firm ground and secure support.”*) R. H. thinks that this firmness is the power of the Missourians, but it is something much greater, because the Missourian pastors like to put their own person in the background. It is rather the power of the Word of God, which breaks its way into the hearts of the listeners, and fills them with such a clear conviction that the church members can say with those Samaritans: “Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and [know](#) that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world”. [[John 4:42](#)] — We are servants of God and not of men, therefore we also want to strengthen in our hearers the state of grace which they have through faith in Christ, so powerfully that all doubts will give way and the joyful certainty will be worked through the Holy Spirit, of which it is said: “[You have received an anointing!](#)” [[cp. 1 John 2:27](#)]

Such Lutherans, who are attached to pure words, no longer want to hear the voice of the stranger, therefore we do not need any church property insurance, with which other synods sometimes want to chain the congregations to themselves. God protect us

*) R. Hoffmann adds: “We could at least learn [this much](#) determination from Missouri, that we finally close the doors of the churches to those who have broken the foundations of faith, and that we stop building even more stern bridges, where every bridge is a denial of Christ.” — This is a pious wish which cannot be realized in today's state churches, because the principle of the ruling Union is this: Indifference in matters of faith, equal justification of error with truth; the truth itself must only be half preached, because everything is more permitted than the Lutheran reproof [[Elenchus](#)]; false doctrine must not be publicly rejected.

from such coercive measures! The sheep of Christ, though simple-minded, have a sensitive ear, and so they learn to distinguish between the voice of a stranger and the Shepherd's voice of Christ, and so they realize what a pasture it is to which they are led! Such a small group of Christians, who are firmly convinced that this is the right way to eternal life, which God has revealed once and for all, who know in whom they believe and who do not equate their God with a fashionable man who reveals himself today in this way and tomorrow in another way, certainly arouses the wrath of the devil and turns the world against us. But we must not care about the judgment of the world, if we only bring souls to Christ and to heaven, then it must be the same for us, whether the world despises or praises us for it, because we know that we will not be judged according to its standard.

Where does it finally come from, that people not only hasten to hear God's Word, but that the members of the congregation also become zealous to do the Lord's work, that they give large sums of money every year for the purposes of the kingdom of God, without being forced to do so by pastoral command, even without the synodical assembly being allowed to impose any conditions? Is this dead orthodoxy, or is it the love of Christ that drives them? That they receive, with great sacrifices, their own week-day schools and are not only concerned with the education of their children in the Lord, but also with the spreading of the Word of God in general? The children of God, who have come to true freedom in Christ their Lord, recognize the purpose that God has with them in this world, namely, that they should serve their fellow man for their salvation and benefit. Otherwise He would certainly take Christians out of the world into heaven as soon as they were converted, but now He makes them for the time being associates and co-workers in His Kingdom of Grace on earth. The joyfulness of Christians, who have become certain of eternal life, also drives them to the right use of earthly goods; once they have become masters over sin, death and the devil, they have

also become masters of Mammon, and scatter it for the blessing of others and for the edification of the kingdom of God. But there is also a lack of love where the hope of eternal life is missing, as it must be under the fetters of the Law. The Apostle, 1 Cor. 13:13, does not link hope with love (sanctification), but to faith; he leaves hope between them: “But now there remains faith, hope, love!” [after Luther Bibel 1545] Let an example show how overflowing with comfort also the rightly understood doctrine of the Election of Grace is for Christians, for this doctrine is preached only to Christians. Just at the same time that the prevailing doctrinal controversy, which grieved many minds, forced them to preach more thoroughly and more often than usual about the Election of Grace for the children of God, the question arose in a small congregation in Illinois whether and what the members wanted to give to the new building in St. Louis. The pastor in question, G. G., writes that he was glad that his congregation was willing to give a sum of money in the congregation, because he was almost worried that his congregation would feel burdened because of a bad harvest that year. The next day, however, three men came to him and declared that they found this sum too small and had decided among themselves that they (the three of them) wanted to themselves alone give this sum for the new building. They asked that another meeting be called. This happened, and the sum agreed upon the first time was doubled. When the pastor asked the three men what motivated them to do this charity, the answer was: “If you hear such sermons as the sermons of the Election of Grace, your heart will have been such that you would like to do something in honor of God!” — If we add to all this the fact that the stream of immigration from Europe, like a slow-moving migration of peoples, is pouring into America, it is certainly not presumptuous to recall here the old prophecies and testimonies which already in the last century pointed to America as the country which in its time

would become a [Pella](#) to orthodox Christians. Thus Dr. [Joh. Ph. Fresenius](#) wrote in Frankfurt in 1756: “Let us consider that perhaps this remote part of the world, in time, when God will visit European Christians with severe punishments for their great ingratitude, could become a place of refuge and salvation for the few believers.” — When somewhat more than twenty years later the North American United States had formed, which had made the separation of church and state and complete freedom of religion a main principle of its constitution, the deacon [Uhrlandt](#) wrote in Gera: “The Church of Jesus Christ should and will remain, even if He, since the earth is large, should rebuild it outside Europe, and the political circumstances are becoming more and more conducive to this, especially since now in the West an independent Christian state has come into being.” What these enlightened men suspected, a careful observer must now see fulfilled with astonishment. Although even here in this country ruin penetrates like a flood of blood, it pleases God to build His Church from this family; the door is wide open for the Church of the Reformation here; it, which lies in ruins in Germany, is to be rebuilt here in this country on the old, eternal foundation! Therefore it happens, without doubt, that the faithful God preserves our Synod without our merit and worthiness, and permits it to stand; it is to work as leaven and as a renewing salt, and by means of true Christianity and true Lutheranism to resist destruction; it has already proved itself as an asylum for many who entered the hospitable shores of this country in a depraved and neglected state. In a period of forty years, while other synods wavered and sought many arts without finding the right support, the Missouri Synod remained solid and immovable on the ground upon which it was built from the beginning. As impetuously as she was invaded on all sides, she did not allow herself

to be made to waver in her resolve to follow the example of the Church of the Reformation unwaveringly on the path she had trodden. On this way that came to pass which is now plain. The confession of the full, entire heavenly truth is again placed on the lampstand, thousands and thousands know again what Lutheran doctrines and ways are. Should we now think that the time has come to go for once beyond Luther, and to correct the God-appointed Reformer, who leads his students back to Holy Scriptures, as our contemporary opponents and other wiseacres have tried to do? That would mean to forsake and despise the God-given blessing of the Reformation and the pure doctrine that has been given again! We may be called Lutherists, but if we are only true Lutherists, then we are also honest Bible Christians, who admittedly renounce false teachers and sects according to God's command, "for they believe not in Luther (as Luther writes), but in Christ Himself. The Word has them, and they have the Word." [*St. L. ed. 15, 1670, § 18; Am. Ed. 43, 68: "To All Who Suffer Persecution"*] This is the Word or faith that the Missouri Synod has remained in until now, and what St. Paul writes to Timothy again applies to us today: "Keep that which is committed to thy trust!" [*1 Timothy 6:20*] There can be no greater grace for a church fellowship than to be the bearer of pure doctrine as appointed by God. The more clearly we recognize it, it is not by our merit that we hold on to the pure gospel, it is God's grace alone that holds us, the more seriously we must watch and pray that no one takes our crown from us!

O Lord! Let it be so ordered
The Christian holy church congregation,
Preserve them on earth!
Through war and victory,
Through suffering and joy,
Until there the glory of heaven
Will be revealed.

[*Kirchen-Gesangbuch #164, verse 17, p. 118, melody TLH 263*]